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ISSUE ONE

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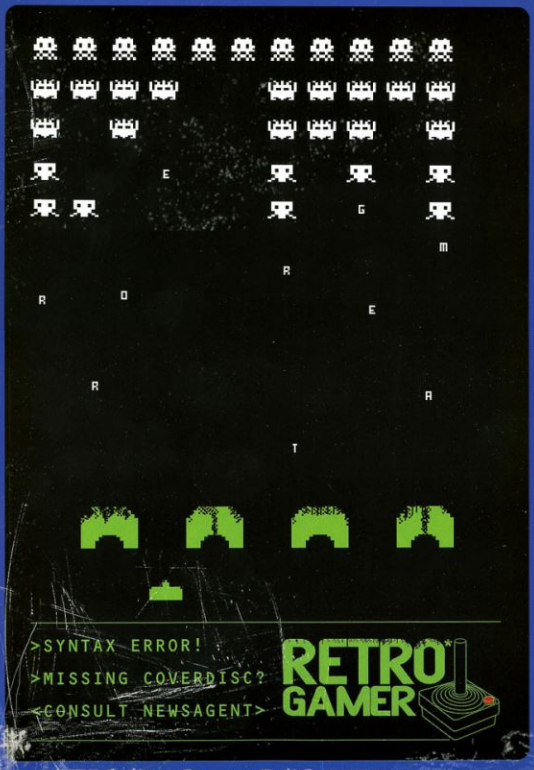

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SOCOM: US Navy Seals
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hELLO

Welcome to issue one of Retro Gamer*, the UK's first regular retro magazine. It's been a long time coming – and yes, there were times when it looked like it would never happen at all – but it's finally here, and you're holding in your hands the start of something very special.

It's only when you begin a project like this that you realise the sheer scope of the retro gaming scene. There are so many games, so many machines, so many memories. We could publish 100 issues and barely scrape the surface. What hope in hell have we got with 100 pages? A scatter-gun approach was the only answer, and I'm confident we've nailed a few targets.

We now need you to help us with our aim. Tell us what you think about the magazine. What have we done right, and more importantly, where have we messed up. Please don't hold back. We need your feedback to shape future issues, so every viewpoint is precious. The panel on the left provides all the necessary contact details.

With that, I'll sign off and leave you in the company of the magazine. Until next time, thanks for showing interest, and if you've already shelled out for the magazine, sincere thanks for your support.

MARTYN CARROLL
EDITOR

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retro news

The latest news from the world of retro gaming

Get your rocks off

Nope, it's not a long overdue reworking of Asteroids sadly, but the almost comparably exciting news that grubby little seed-meister Leisure Suit Larry is pulling on his raincoat once more and sinking into the murky underworld of sex shops, brothels and ladies of the night for another close-to-the-bone adventure!

This seventh Larry adventure, dubbed Magna Cum Laude, (which is actually some sort of Yankee award for being the biggest swot in a particular university, but also has the word cum in it, making it naturally 'hilarious' LSL fare), introduces Larry to the younger, hipper scene of PS2 and Xbox, and also reacquaints him with his old friend and sleazing buddy, the PC.

The lewdster returns in a brand new adventure, the seventh to date

Taking its inspiration from such high-brow art house films as American Pie, we can expect lots of leching and leering, but not a whole lot of actual lovin', as Larry gets knocked back time and again by the lovely ladies in the game. While no one on the Retro Gamer team can imagine what that must feel like, we're looking forward to finding out. So, get your leisure suits dry-cleaned, pressed and ready for action when this one arrives later this year!

Retro Zone

The second Micro Mart Computer Fair took place at the NEC in November, and once again the star of the show was the Retro Zone. Like an island of tranquillity in a hall full of sweaty bargain hunters, the Retro Zone gathered together the cream of the current retro scene. Allan Bairstow from Commodore Scene magazine was in attendance, showing off both classic and contemporary Commodore machines. Ever seen an accelerated C64 with a 4Gb hard drive? You would have if you were there. Other attendees included representatives from QUANTA, showing several generations of the Sinclair QL, Colin Piggot from Quazar (Issue six of his Sam Revival magazine is on sale now) and Colin Woodcock, editor of the ZXF online Spectrum magazine. As an added treat, Arcade Warehouse supplied several arcade machines for the day, including the classic Dragon's Lair.

The Retro Zone event was expertly organised by Micro Mart column writer Shaun Bebbington, who also showed off rare computers from his extensive collection. Overall, the fair was a success, and the Retro Zone a highpoint. Here's hope that it goes ahead again next year, and if it does, don't miss it!

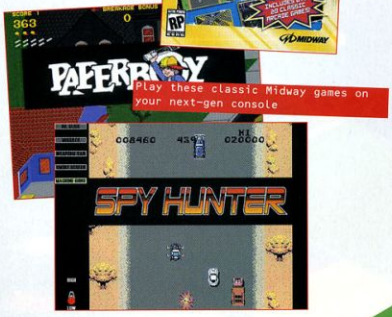
Photographs from the recent Retro Zone event

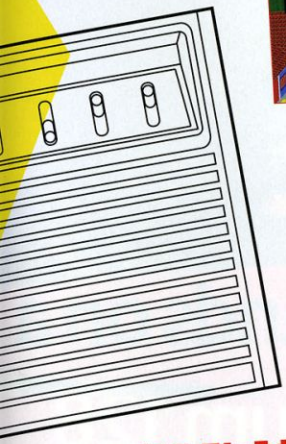
Buried Treasure

If you're too thick to figure out the emulation stuff (or just irritatingly honest), then don't worry, you don't have to miss out on your retro fix. Companies like Midway are realising that "there's gold in them thar cupboards", so they're busy dusting off their back catalogues and repacking them as anthologies of loveliness. The latest is Midway Arcade Treasures for the PS2, Xbox and GameCube.

Featuring 22 classic titles, MAT is a trip down memory lane that will moisten the eyes of anyone who's got a lifetime of gaming experience behind them. Here's a list of what's on it (deep breath) – Spyhunter, Defender, Gauntlet, Joust, Paperboy, Rampage, Marble Madness, Robotron 2084, Smash TV, Joust 2, Bubbles, Roadblasters, Stargate, Moon Patrol, Blaster, Rampart, Sinistar, Super Sprint, 720, Toobin', KLAX, SPLAT!, Satan's Hollow and Vindicators!

Now if there's nothing in there to get you drooling you must have sold your soul to EA. And believe us, you're going to hell for that.





Half Fish. Half Machine. All Cop

Thirteen years after he first made his debut, James Pond has returned. Originally appearing on the Amiga ST and then gracing the likes of Sega's Megadrive, the chubby-faced mecha-fish finally slinks his way onto the PSone, a machine that in itself could be deemed as retro.

Robocod was the second outing for James Pond, who proved to be one of the most memorable platform characters of the 16-bit era. Purists will be pleased to note that the game is exactly the same as the 1992 Atari ST version, apart from a slight reworking of the intro sequence. Dr Mebbe has hijacked Santa's Lapland toy factory and kidnapped all the little elves. What a horrible little sod! Fortunately our hero Robocod, with his magically expanding stomach (it goes up instead of the one you've got, that goes out), is on the case, sure to bring scaly justice and free the dynamite-bound elves. What follows is 36 levels of platform mayhem for the bargain price of £9.99. All we wonder know is what happened to the PS2 update of Robocod, originally announced a couple of years ago? Robocod has been released by budget specialists Play It, and is out now.

Codemasters Honored

Founders of Codemasters, Richard, David and father Jim Darling, have all been honoured recently by the UK computer and videogames industry. At the industries annual dinner the father and sons, who formed the company in 1986, were presented with the ELSPA Hall of Fame award.

Richard and David were teenagers when they launched Codemasters with father Jim acting as Chairman. The brothers had already been creating games for some years, firstly selling via mail order before working as developers for publishing companies, which provided the funds to form Codemasters in 1986. Since their first release 'BMX Simulator', Codemasters has had over 60 number one best-sellers and published some of the games industries most popular titles. David Darling, CEO of Codemasters said "We're honoured to receive the award. We've always been passionate about creating games and to be recognised by ELSPA is immensely pleasing".

Fashion Victims

We've come a long way (baby). Games are in fashion – literally. No longer the preserve of the spotty kid with a pasty pallor even Steve Davis would snigger at, suddenly the world is realising what we've always known – games are cool! And now you can wear your obsession with pride. Fashion labels are springing up all over the place, each desperate to cash in on the craze, but in our opinion none are doing it with more style than the Joystick Junkies (**www.joystickjunkies.com**).

With a whole range of eye-catching t-shirts (and yes, hotpants!) that you really wouldn't be ashamed to be seen wearing down your local roller disco, there's something for everyone – from Space Invaders to Defender and all the way up to perhaps the greatest video game ever, the mighty Sensible Soccer. And all at more than reasonable prices. So get along to their Web site for a look and smarten yourself up!

1
t your hands on a
X Spectrum 128

>sinclair research

We simply couldn't launch a retro magazine without running a feature on the Sinclair range of computers. John Southern, our resident Sinclair expert, looks at every model, from the ZX80 to the QL, and brings us up to date with what's happening in the Sinclair scene right now

The ZX80

In the beginning

It all really got started in January 1980. This was when Sinclair Research announced a new computer engineers had been working on since May the previous year. The Sinclair ZX80 came to life in February, when the first kits started to sell at computer fairs. This was not Clive Sinclair's first venture into selling computers; his previous MK14 kit had sold well, but nothing like the demand for the ZX80. In total, some 50,000 of these first stepping stones to modern computers were sold. Not as many as you would perhaps imagine, but enough to start the computer craze in the UK.

In white moulded plastic, the ZX80 could be bought in kit form (£79.95) or pre-built and ready to run (£99.95). Advertising in major national newspapers brought the computer to the attention of many who saw it as the future and something educational to buy for their children. Sales took off and hundreds of children throughout the country got their first taste of BASIC programming. However, all was not as you would expect. The ZX80 could only do integer mathematics. Decimal points where unheard of. Although this sounds strange today, the Sinclair BASIC, which was written by John Grant of Nine Tiles, had to be squeezed onto a 4K ROM chip. The machine's limited memory was a real drawback and very soon, Sinclair started to sell 3K RAM expansion packs. As prices for memory started to fall at the beginning of the 80s, Sinclair later brought out a 16K expansion module. Around the world, the ZX81 price mark broke barriers at $199 in the USA and Dmk 498 in Germany.

Version 2.0

1981 saw the release of Sinclair's improved ZX81. It was launched in March, in a blaze of television and media publicity. Similar in looks, the black-cased ZX81 had hardware mainly designed by the ZX80 designer, Jim Westwood. The upgraded 8K ROM finally had a decimal point for its mathematics routines. For those who had bought a ZX80, they could buy an 8K ROM upgrade, although it was the end of Autumn before the final maths bugs had been sorted out. The new machine retailed for an unprecedented £69.95. This low price was mainly due to the Ferranti-produced ULA (Uncommitted Logic Array) which reduced the number of components and, therefore, the overall cost. The ZX80 contained 21 chips, whereas the ZX81 contained just four chips, including the RAM and processor.

The ZX81 possessed 1K of RAM, but for £29.95 you could purchase a 16K RAM pack. However, these expansion packs had one major design fault. To save money, the computers did not have a socket for expansion. They relied on the circuit board itself. Copper circuit tracks ran to the edge of the board. The expansion packs had to grip the original board and make a connection. During

>Official add-ons.

The Sinclair ZX Printer came to market in time for Christmas 1981, costing a very reasonable £49.95 (this later rose to £59.95 because of rising production costs). At the time, 9 pin dot matrix printers typically sold for £200 to £300. The printer used aluminium coated black paper. The stylus was electrically charged and this burnt away the aluminium, leaving the black paper to show through. At 32 characters wide (about 4in), the black on silver output was mainly used for printing program listings. The printer may have been cheap, but the paper was not, costing £12 for five small rolls. Fortunately for businesses attempting to use the ZX81, third party manufacturers produced interfaces that allowed a standard Centronic printer to be connected. By the time the Spectum arrived, the ZX Printer had almost been phased out, but it could still be connected to the new computer.

1983 saw the launch of the Sinclair Interface 1. This was a small expansion module that raised the back of the spectrum. Along with two 100 baud network ports and a real RS-232-C port for either printers or modems, the Interface 1 had a new connection port. This port allowed the connection of up to eight Sinclair's Microdrives. The ZX Microdrive was a cheap mass storage device using an endless loop of 1.9mm video tape. Each unit was priced at £49.95, although £79.95 got you one plus the Interface 1. Between 85k and 100K could be stored on a cartridge, and at 15k per second, that meant that games could be loaded very quickly. At the time it was seen as a cheap, reliable form of storage, but the new 3.5in disks slowly ate the market and third party manufacturers produced floppy drive interfaces.

The Sinclair Interface 2 was also released in 1983. This was Sir Clive's answer to the boom in console sales, and the small unit (priced at £19.95) contained two joystick ports and a ROM cartridge slot. Several cartridge games were released, including a quartet of classics titles from Ultimate, but they were priced at £15 each! Granted, they loaded quicker than their cassette-based counterparts, but who would pay three times more for that privilege? Another blow was that the ROM cartridges could only store 16K games, so the growling library of 48K games was not supported.

the design phase, this was reasonable, but in practice, the memory expansion was prone to lose some contact, so your carefully typed-in program was at risk if anything was to knock the pack. And as the keyboard was nothing but a membrane, it was possible to press a key just a little too hard and the whole machine would move enough to crash. Although a major headache for users, this did lead to the creation of many a small company, attempting to solve the problem. These solutions ranged from blu-tak or velcro fasteners to metal strips and screws which bolted onto the expansion pack.

The ingenuity of users started to show too. Tired of a black and white television screen? Just buy a sheet of green plastic film and you have a green screen monitor just like the expensive business computers! Hardware peripheral manufacturers sprung up in almost every garden shed, which was remarkable because most *were* garden sheds. Memory could be added to a massive 1Mb, although this relied on memory paging. Memotech produced a hi-resolution expansion box. Moving-key keyboards were popular, along with joysticks and even digitising tablets.

Gathering pace

The success of the ZX81 snowballed. After sales reached a certain point, there were enough young wannabe programmers desperate to make the next big selling hit. These programs increased the software catalogue and so in turn persuaded others to buy the machine. Christmas 1981 saw thousands of parents spending the whole of the festive season trying to get the level on a tape recorder just perfect to be able to load in a program off a cassette tape.

Magazines sprung up quickly to try and cater for the demand, with many printing program listings. Nobody thought it was strange to type in a hexadecimal computer listing that was an obvious photocopy from someone's Sinclair thermal printer, save it to cassette and hope it did *something* useful before the machine crashed and lost everything!

Pre-recorded software was the wise alternative. The Sinclair ZX Software arm produced a range of cassette-based teaching aids but these were not successful. Games, however, did rule. With its very limited graphics, it was possible to play Space Invaders as long as you had no problem pretending the chunky graphics were alien-like. There was some innovation though, with 3D Monster Maze being one of the original first-person adventures.

Within two years, over one million ZX81 computers had been sold, some 300,000 via Sinclair's own mail order service. Of course, some people never give in. You can still buy original kits, so never mind collecting, start using! The ZX Team are a user group of (friendly) fanatics who still support the ZX80/81 and their clones. Fancy making a portable? Visit their site (**www.zx81.de**) and go to the projects page.

A selection of official Sinclair peripherals

The ZX Spectrum

The glory days

Having turned the nation into a computer literate frenzy, 1982 saw Sir Clive Sinclair reach a pinnacle. He had been snubbed by the BBC, who chose Acorn Computers (set up by Chris Curry who had once worked for Sinclair) to build a computer endorsed by the national TV broadcaster. At £400, the Acorn BBC models A and B were a little beyond the reach of most, and Sinclair planned his revenge. In another glare of camera lights, he announced the new Sinclair ZX Spectrum. The first noticeable feature was colour. Then there was the price. £125 bought the 16K RAM version or £175 for the 48K model (within six months, the 16K model dropped to £99.95, making the first colour computer available for under £100). Although not equipped with all the interface ports of the BBC, the price difference was to be a huge factor.

At the launch, Sinclair's marketing team had learned some new tricks. They constantly referred to the educational software that would be available; a brilliant move as every child in the country could try to persuade their parents that the computer could help with school work. What parent could take the chance that their child could be left behind? The first few days saw such a buying frenzy that the Sinclair mail order department could not keep up with demand. These delays were to become part of folklore and the mail order department was never able to shake its less than stellar image.

Almost immediately, industries sprung up to support the Spectrum. Magazines were launched, software companies created almost nightly, and hardware add-ons flourished. Most people bought the 16K version as you could later upgrade to 48K by slotting in extra RAM chips for about £50. Programmers had by now spent two years learning how to cram code into 16K. This was the machine they had been waiting for.

After Christmas, school playgrounds became a battle field of rivalries. Parents who had paid extra to buy a BBC or one of the newly imported Atari computers found their child outnumbered by the Spectrum-owning kids. This rivalry intensified with each new machine launched, forcing the owners to become inventive in their programming. Other computers could boast better hardware features and facilities. Spectrum users made up for this by using brilliant software hacks. Every time a new program hit the shop shelves it was eagerly bought and carefully reverse-engineered to learn just how the programmer had implemented the new features. Disassembler programs were common, and no-one thought anything wrong with taking other programmer's code to pieces in pursuit of learning.

Profit from piracy

No-one worried about reverse engineering because a much bigger existed. Software was sold and stored on cassette tape, and any child could connect a

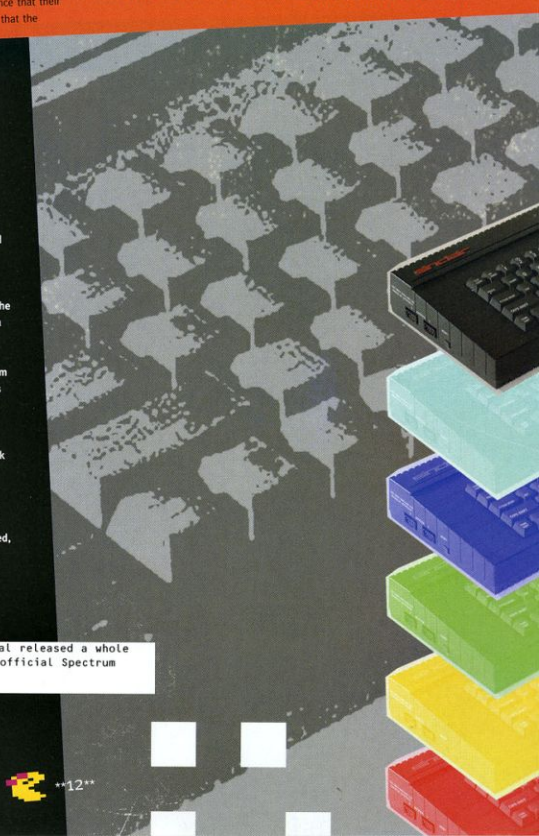
>Sinclair overseas.

Starting with the ZX81, the machines were being manufactured by the American Timex company in their Dundee factory. This gave Sinclair a way into the American market. Timex re-badged the ZX81 and Spectrum and sold them in the States as the TS1000 and TS2000 respectively.

Other countries saw the success and a few started to make their own cloned versions. Brazil and Argentina were not part of the official Sinclair distribution and many unofficial clones were produced. These ranged from the MicroDigital TK82 clone of the ZX80 to the Argentinean Czerweny Electronica CZ2000+ Spectrum clone. Hong Kong followed with a Spectrum derivative called the Lambda 8300. However, most clones came from behind the iron curtain. The cold war meant that Sinclair could do little about copyright. From Slovakia came the Didaktik Gama. It is actually still possible to find versions for sale, with the Didaktik Kompakt having a built-in disk drive! Russia naturally went a little further and produced the Hobeta or Hobbit Personal Computer in Leningrad, with a high degree of compatibility and a considerably improved spec: 64K RAM, dual 5.25in disk drives, three joystick ports, both TV and RGB monitor output, parallel and serial ports. It was mainly sold for use in Russian schools.

The ultimate Spectrum though was the Scorpion ZS-256 – a Z80B 7Mhz CPU with a huge 256K of RAM. It came with a disk drive controller and TR-DOS. More recently in 1996, an upgraded Spectrum called the Sprinter arrived, which could run both TR-DOS and MS-DOS!

MicroDigital released a whole host of unofficial Spectrum clones



couple of tape recorders together and run off a copy or two. You could buy the latest game and within a day, have swapped it at school for dozens of other games. Although illegal, everyone knew that you could quickly have a huge library of programs. Buy a Spectrum and stock up on C90 tapes, and you could end up with hundreds of the cutting edge programs for a fraction of the price compared to BBC owners. Acorn hit back the only way they could – by introducing add-ons such as 5.25in disk drives. Sadly these were so expensive that third party manufacturers produced their own, adding to confusion over single or double sided and single or double density. Spectrum users just bought double tape players – so their parents could also copy music – and more C90s!

The early days saw a host of innovative games as each new feature of the Spectrum was discovered. Having thousands of bedroom programmers meant that the market was ruthless. Thousands of games were written, and as piracy was rife, only the very best sold. For all of the features of modern computer games with extensive graphics and dialogue, the ultimate test is playability. Limited hardware meant that, to survive and make a million, the games had to grab your attention and be instantly playable. The list is impressive. Early success came to companies like Imagine, with tales of young programmers earning thousands. After its spectacular collapse, many left to form other companies such as Ocean. Probably the best known software house was Ashby Computer Graphics which traded under the name of Ultimate Play The Game. It produced classics such as Jetpac, Atic Atac and Knight Lore. As a typical game took some six minutes to load, it soon became common for a splash screen to be loaded before the rest of the program. Many software houses at the time hired artists just to produce these images, which due to the limited palette and resolutions, were in fact real works of art.

Third party hardware manufacturers flourished, and fought to out do one another with inventive add-ons, including graphics tablets, full-sized printers, alternative storage media and, due to the popularity of games, joysticks. Where the rival BBC had analogue joysticks requiring expensive potentiometers, the Spectrum made do with cheaper contact switches.

When it came to the keyboard, Sinclair had learned valuable lesssons from the previous computers. The flat membrane keyboards had been poorly thought of, and in an effort to reduce cost but improve features, the Spectrum used a membrane as the contacts, but this time had rubber blocks for the keys. The 'Dead Flesh' keyboard gave a little response back, but many add-on keyboards were developed and sold. With so much potential for third party fixes, the system was as cheap as you were willing to pay. You could live with the basic model or spend as much as your piggy bank could afford to buy yourself a better computer.

>super spectrum.

No, not the SAM Coupe, but rather the Spectrum +3e. This souped-up Speccy is the work of Garry Lancaster. He's basically upgraded the +3 ROMs, fixing bugs and adding new features. The improvements range from the small (you can now change the colours in the editor) to the significant (the introduction of user-defined text windows). Best of all, the enhanced ROMs allow you to connect a standard IDE hard drive to your Spectrum +3 (or +2A)! Obviously you need to construct a suitable interface, but if your soldering skills are up the scratch, the new software will do the rest. It's even possible to build an interface that plugs directly into the Z80 socket, so the connector sits neatly inside the casing. Lancaster reports that he's connected drives as big as 8Gb, and he sees no reason why you can't connect even bigger drives. For more information about the Spectrum +3e, including details on how to upgrade your ROMs with the new code, visit Garry's Web site at www.zxplus3e.plus.com.

Upgrade your Spectrum +3 to support a standard IDE hard drive

Broadening the range

Sinclair was on a roll, with Spectrums being shipped as fast as they could be made. The Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, presented one to the Japanese leader, and Clive Sinclair was knighted in 1983.

In October the following year, the Sinclair ZX Spectrum+ was produced. This was similar to a software patch. It was still the same machine but had a working keyboard, where the keys actually moved. By 1985, sales started to slide and so the Spectrum+ was again improved to produce the ZX Spectrum 128. This new machine had the keyboard of the Spectrum+ and a new sound system, with three channels and seven octaves, plus the ubiquitous 128K RAM. The new 128 BASIC did away with the one-touch entry system of the original version, although you could still switch to 48K compatibility mode if needed. Britain finally saw the model in February 1986, but by then Sinclair was on the way out. A few months later, Amstrad took over Sinclair after the company sustained heavy financial losses, accredited to the doomed Sinclair C5. The Spectrum 128 was soon dropped as Amstrad consolidated the operation, making it something of a rarity today.

In 1987, Amstrad sold the Taiwanese-manufactured ZX Spectrum +2. This was basically a Spectrum 128 stuffed inside Amstrad's own CPC 6128 case. With the built-in tape player, it was perfect for playing games and marketed more as a console than a computer (early packs even came bundled with a light gun). Development continued but at a slower pace. 1988 saw the release of the Spectrum +3. This was basically a +2 with a built-in disk drive replacing the tape player. It also included an upgraded version of BASIC, complete with new disk operating commands. At £250, the +3 was not a big seller. This was partially due to the unusual choice of disk format. Amstrad opted for its own 3in disk drive rather than the standard 3.5in floppy drive that is still used today. The +2 was still popular though, and the upgraded +2A model also appeared in 1988. This was basically a +2 with +3 BASIC, and a port to connect a standalone disk drive that was never released. This model outlived the +3 and remained on sale well into the early 90s.

The Sinclair QL

Sir Clive gets serious

Riding on the wave of success from the ZX Spectrum, Sinclair decided that the business market was the next big thing. This time, it was not to be a super Spectrum, but rather a leap forward. The Sinclair QL (Quantum Leap) was marketed as the first 32-bit business machine to retail for under £400.

The first improvement was the memory. Chip prices were slowly falling so 128K on-board was possible. Ending Sinclair's use of the Z80 processors, the QL used the new Motorola 68008 chip, although once again with only a 16-bit bus. The ability to connect a real computer monitor or television offered the best of both worlds, while the twin Microdrives would provide rapid storage for programs and data. How could it go wrong?

The launch was dogged by the fact that the hardware was not quite complete. The new QDOS operating system did not fit into the ROM and so initial models had a 'Dongle' circuit board. This was complicated by a disastrous mail order arm

>software support.

Every QL was sold with four business programs written by Psion, who itself went on to produce handheld computers. Quill was the standard word processing package while Archive was a database, capable of real business use and scripting. Abacus introduced spreadsheets, only to be let down by Easel for graphical output. This was not really down to the software, but the fact that QLs only had four colours (Black, White, Red and Green) made graphics somewhat limited.

Games did not take off for the QL, which was both its downfall and its saving grace. Without games it failed to hit the mass market. No games meant that it was used in businesses throughout the country and further afield. Software was written and is still being improved. The latest commercial software, released just a few weeks ago, is called Launchpad. This is a program launcher and general GUI for all the differing operating systems.

The Z88

After Sinclair had been bought by Amstrad, Sir Clive was not quite out of the market. He formed Cambridge Computers which manufactured the very portable Z88. This was really a follow on to the Grundy NewBrain designed by the Sinclair Radionics company, which was released in 1980 and would possibly have been the BBC computer had ownership not changed before launch. The Z88s are still favoured by some researchers as the rubber keyboard is silent, so it can be used in libraries and recording studies throughout the world. Oddly, the operating system is very similar to that of the Acorn BBC.

which failed to supply machines. The independent user group (QUANTA) was formed before anyone managed to get hold of a machine and even produced a magazine before machines were shipped. At the same time, the 3.5in disk drive arrived. Previously, the Microdrive was seen as a viable alternative to cassette tape, capable of holding 100K on each continuous loop of tape. Drives of 3.5in killed this idea so that very soon, any self-respecting QL user had upgraded by adding a third party disk interface.

Launching the Sinclair C5 tricycle around the same time did not do the name of Sinclair any favours. Slowly, the rise of the Intel/IBM PC eroded the market. Over 100,000 QLs were eventually sold. BT, with Merlin, produced a clone called the Merlin Tonto, and ICL, which later became part of the Fujitsu empire, made a version called the One-Per-Desk. These two models had built in telephones and modems along with being made in a dark beige colour, rather than the now standard Sinclair black. Other compatibles followed including the CST Thor. By 1986 Sinclair's fortunes had reduced to the state where Amstrad took over its business. Amstrad, ever one to market a good idea, stopped production of the QL and focused on improved versions of the Spectrum.

The QL lives!

The network sockets never worked as stated, but the added RS-232-C ports did leave an opening for attaching a modem as well as a printer. Cheap 1200/75 baud modems allowed many people to use bulletin boards for communications. Online communities developed and dedicated users grouped together. Just like a PC has evolved from an XT to the modern 3GHz machine, the QL has since evolved both in hardware and software. The user group is still going strong, with monthly meetings in various parts of the country.

After disk drive interfaces and memory expansions, the QL really took the hearts of its users with accelerator cards from Miracle Systems. Upgrading the processor and RAM was then usually followed by ROM changes. Full keyboards, mice and proper disk drives followed. Never mind 1.44Mbs per disk – later QLs used ED disks capable of storing 3.2Mbs each! Hard drives eventually came and the latest models now being produced are the Q40 and Q60, which use faster processors and are housed in standard PC cases. These can run either the QDOS operating system or Linux.

QDOS survived because the SuperBASIC was more like a Pascal language in some respects. Multitasking was the norm. Improved ROMs became available along with additional software toolkits. Finally, a replacement operating system was produced which is now called SMSQ/E. RG

Down but not out. Sir Clive strikes back with the Z88 portable computer

>Sinclair model specs.

ZX80
NEC 780C-1 (Zilog Z80A compatible)
3.25MHz
4K ROM
32x24 characters
64x48 (Quarter Character blocks) graphics
Black and white via a UHF TV aerial adapter
No Sound
Microphone and earphone sockets at 250 baud
Expansion bus
Touch-sensitive, smooth-membrane keyboard

ZX81
NEC 780C-1 (Zilog Z80A compatible)
3.25MHz
4K ROM
32x24 characters
Black and white via a UHF TV aerial adapter
No Sound
Microphone and earphone sockets at 250 baud
Expansion bus
Touch-sensitive, smooth-membrane keyboard

ZX Spectrum
3.54MHz Zilog Z80A
16K or 48K RAM
32x22 text 256x192 8 colour graphics
1 channel 5 octave range sound
Dead Flesh Keyboard

ZX Spectrum+
3.54MHz Zilog Z80A
48K RAM
32x22 text 256x192 8 colour graphics
1 channel 5 octave range sound
Tactile Keyboard

ZX Spectrum 128
3.54MHz Zilog Z80A
128K RAM
32x22 text 256x192 8 colour graphics
3 channel 7 octave range sound
Tactile Keyboard
Joystick ports
RS-232-C
Midi Out

ZX Spectrum+2/+2A
3.54MHz Zilog Z80A
128K RAM
32x22 text 256x192 8 colour graphics
3 channel 7 octave range sound
Tactile Keyboard, Grey casing
Built-in tape recorder
Joystick ports
RS-232-C
Midi Out

ZX Spectrum+3
3.54MHz Zilog Z80A
128K RAM
32x22 text 256x192 8 colour graphics
3 channel 7 octave range sound
Tactile Keyboard
3in disk drive
Joystick ports
RS-232-C
Midi Out

Sinclair QL
7.5 MHz
Motorola MC68008P
128K RAM
48K ROM
42x25 text, 256x256 8 colours, 512x256 4 colours
2 joystick ports
2 RS-232-C ports
TV and monitor connections
2 100K Microdrives
2 network sockets

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Nokia Games: 3410, 6310, 6610, 7210, 7650, 3510, 3650, 5100, 6100, 7250.
Siemens Games: C55, M50, SL42, SL45i, MT50, S55.
Motorola Games: T720.
Sharp Games: GX10

COMPATIBLE PHONES FOR POLYPHONIC RINGTONES:

Ericsson: A2628, T300, T310, P800
Motorola: T720/T720i, C350, MPX-200.
Nokia: 2100, 3310, 3510, 3510i, 3585, 3650, 5100, 6100, 6610, 7210, 7250, 7650.
Panasonic: GD55, GD60, GD60P, GD67, GD87, GD88, GD89.
Samsung: 105, C100, N600, N620, P400, Q100, S100, S200, S300, T100, V100, V200, V200c, X700, X710.
Sharp: GX1, GX10, GX10a, GX10g, GX10i, GX10s, GX12, GX15, GX20.
Siemens: C55, SL55.

COMPATIBLE PHONES FOR STANDARD MONO RINGTONES:

Ericsson: T20e, T29, T39, T60, T65, T66, R520 m-rec, R600, T69
Motorola: V100, Walkabout 191, Timeport 250, 260, V50, V8088, V90.
Nokia: 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 3510, 3510i, 3585, 3590, 3650, 5100, 5210, 5510, 6090, 6100, 6110, 6130, 6150, 6210, 6250, 6310, 6310i, 6510, 7110, 7210, 7250, 7650, 8110i, 8210, 8250, 8310, 8810e, 8850, 8890, 8910i, 9000i, 9110i, 9210, NK303, NK702.
Sagem: MC930, MC932, MW932, MC936, MC939, MW939, MC940, MC942, MC946, MC949, MC950, MC952, MC956, MC959, MC959R, MW3026.
Samsung: R210.

COMPATIBLE PHONES FOR LOGOS:

Ericsson: T20e, T29, T39, T65, T66, R600,
Motorola: V90, C350
Nokia: 2100, 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 3585, 3590, 3510, 3510i, 5100, 5210, 5510, 6100, 6110, 6130, 6150, 6210, 6250, 6310, 6310i, 6510, 6610, 7110, 7210, 7250, 7650, 8210, 8250, 8310, 8810e, 8850, 8890, 8910i, 9000i, 9110i, 9210, NK303, NK702.
Sagem: MW3026.
Samsung: N600, N620.

COMPATIBLE PHONES FOR PICTURE MESSAGING:

Nokia: 2100, 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 3510, 3585, 3590, 3650, 5210, 5510, 6100, 6110, 6250, 6310, 6310i, 6510, 6610, 7210, 7250, 7650, 8110, 8210, 8310, 8850, 8890, 8910i.
Samsung: 105, N600, N620, P400, T100, V100

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Great Tones

Standard Tones>

Top 20

50 Cent - PIMP	22194
Beyonce - Crazy in Love	22037
Beyonce/Sean Paul - Baby Boy	22176
Big Brovaz - Baby Boy	22092
Blazin' Squad - Flip Reverse	22191
Blondie - Good Boys	21177
Blu Cantrell Feat. Sean Paul - Breathe	22103
Blue - Guilty	22178
Emma Bunton - Maybe	22198
Hilary Duff - So Yesterday	22109
Junior Senior - Rhythm Bandits	22109
Lemar - Dance	22113
Liberty X - Jumpin'	22211
Milk & Sugar - Let the Sunshine	22182
Obie Trice - Got Some Teeth	22213
Pink - Trouble	22183
Sean Paul - Like Glue	22127
Sophie Ellis Bextor - Mixed Up World	22204
Sugababes - Hole In My Head	22187
Ultrabeat - Pretty Green Eyes	22118

Christmas

Wizzard - I wish it would be	
Chrismas Everyday	8511
Frosty the Snowman	8504
Ding Dong Merrily on High	1117
Jingle Bells	1101
Silent Night	1103
Wham - Last Christmas	8510
Slade -	
Merry Chrismas Everybody	8509
Bing Crosby - White Chrismas	8500

Movies

Xmen	2965
Charlie's Angels	21003
James Bond	2006
Mission Impossible	2001
The Great Escape	7319
Spiderman	20005
The Italian Job	8997
The Good, The bad and the ugly	2005
Jaws	2020
Gladiator	6963
Godfather	21004
Beverley Hills Cop	2007
Raiders of the lost ark	2019
Rocky	2003
20th Century Fox	22040
Exorcist - Tubular Bells	2815

Television

Only Fools and Horses	22063
Friends	2216
The Simpsons	2238
A Team	2204
Rainbow	1480
Man Behaving Badly	2227
Star Trek	2240
The Muppet Show	2230
Phoenix Nights	1500
Big Brother	2247
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	2208
Loony Toons	2515
X Files	2004
Pink Panther	1834
Monty Python	2238
Eastenders	2212
Scooby Doo	2235
Formula One	6949
Hawaii Five O	2219
Magic Roundabout	21005
The Office - Handbags & Gladrags	4151

Football

Match of the Day	2226
Queen - We are the Champions	7801
Elton John - Are you ready for Love	22131
3 Lions - Lightning Seeds	8021
Fat Les - Vindaloo	8022
Arsenal - Vierra	8342
Aston Villa - High Ho Silver Lining	8029
Chelsea - Blue is the Colour	8028
Leeds - Leeds United	8033
Man City - Blue Moon	8031
Man Utd - Glory, Glory	2157

Eighties

AHA - Take on me	2601
Bananarama - Venus	20045
Billy Idol - Rebel Yell	6669
Black Lace - Agadoo	20042
Blondie - Atomic	6725
Blondie - The Tide is High	6728
Bruce Springsteen - Born in the USA	6766
Dead or Alive - You spin me round	4761
Depeche Mode - I Just Can't get Enough	2810
Frankie Goes To Hollywood - Relax	20046
Huey Lewis and the News - The Power of Love	20031
INXS - Need you Tonight	20052
Jean Michel Jarre - Oxygen	2812
Madness - Baggy Trousers	1472
Michael Jackson - Thriller	21004
Michael Jackson - Billie Jean	20039
Nik Kershaw - Wouldn't it be good	9221
The Pixies - Don't Stand so Close to Me	9298
The Proclaimers - 500 Miles	1003
Village People - YMCA	2819

Dance/R&B

R Kelly - Ignition	4762
Justin Timberlake - Cry me a River	4616
Mis-teeq - Scandalous	4672
Nelly - Hot in Here	4302
Nelly / Kelly Rowland - Dilemma	4477
Ashanti - Happy	4510
Craig David - What's your Flava	4484
Robert Miles - Children	3005
DJ Sammy - Heaven	4515
Love Inc - Superstar	4592
Scooter - Weekend	4711
Tomcraft - Loneliness	4743
Energy 52 - Cafe Del Mar	4486

Hip Hop

Big Brovaz - Nu Flow	4483
Big Brovaz - Favourite Things	4740
Eminem - Cleaning out my Closet	4426
Eminem - Lose Yourself	4527
Eminem - Business	22042
50 Cent - In Da Club	4654
DMX - X Gon Give it to Ya	4734
P Diddy - Bad Boy for Life	1422

Pop

Christina Aguilera - Fighter	4749
Christina Aguilera - Dirrty	4502
Pink - Feel Good Time	22088
Avril Lavigne - Sk8er Boi	4590
Robbie Williams/Kylie - Kids	7061
Kylie - Can't Get you out of my...	4091
Britney - One More Time	4393
Amy Studt - Misfit	22020
Girls Aloud - Life Got Cold	22083
Blue - All Rise	4036
Oasis - Rock with it	9237
Westlife - Uptown Girl	4019
Gareth Gates - Spirit in the sky	4592
Mis-teeq - All I Want	4048

Rock

Chilli Peppers - By the way	4322
Chilli Peppers - Can't stop	4652
Evanescence - Bring me to life	22003
Bon Jovi - Living on a Prayer	6744
Nickelback - How you remind...	4202
White Stripes - 7 Nation Army	4737
Good Charlotte - Lifestyles	4612
Linkin Park - In the End	4106
Run DMC - Walk this Way	2600
Guns & Roses - Paradise city	6998
The Darkness - Growing on me	23025

Polyphonic Tones>

Top 20

Nickelback - Someday	55324
Amy Studt - Under the Thumb	55321
Travis - Re-Offender	55342
Jamelia - Superstar	55330
Rachel Stevens - My LA EX	55331
The Strokes - 12:51	55336
B2K - Uh Huh	55377
Texas - Carnival Girls	55382
Suede - Attitude	55375
Fast Food Rockers - Say Cheese	55375
Holly Valance - Kiss Of mind	55377
Ashanti - Rain On Me	56535
Elbow - Fugitive Hotel	55476
Mark Owen - Alone Without You	55477
Phixx - Hold On Me	55473
Kym Marsh - Sentimental	55477
Wayne Wonder - Bounce Along	55478
Kylie - Slow	56540
Atomic Kitten - Come To Me	56541
Emma Bunton - Maybe	56537

Christmas

Wizzard - I wish it would be Chrismas Everyday	55213
Frosty the Snowman	54002
Ding Dong Merrily on High	54001
Jingle Bells	54004
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Charlie's Angels	56088
James Bond	52214
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Spiderman	52209
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Godfather	55119
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Pink Panther	55120
Monty Python	52289
Eastenders	52279
Sex and The City	55076
Pop Idol	52424
Phoenix Nights	55376

Great Games & Logos

Java Games Java Games Java Games Java Games Java Game

1754 - Backgammon

2903 - Bumble Beez

1283 Cat Vs Dog

1161 - Caveman

1285 - Chopper Rescue

1762 - Cow Bandits

1295 - Fish v Shrimp

2930 - M Football

1299 - Fruit Machine

1300 - Hell's Pit

2929 - Lost Scorpion

1320 - Moon Taxi

1333 - Pop Star

1337 - Skateboarder

1339 - Snowboard Race

2947 - Tomato Rain

1356 - Water Baloon

1788 - Zapper

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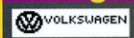


31063 - Volkswagen

31073 - Lamborghini

31108 - BMW

31262 - Alfa Romeo

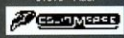
31393 - Audi

31398 - Formula 1

31399 - Ferrari

31402 - Ford

31666 - Mini



4782 - Colin McRae

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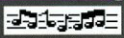
31174 - Eminem

31544 - Linkin Park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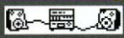
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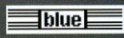

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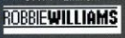
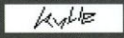


6238 - Robbie Williams

6292 - 2 Pac

6304 - Blink 182



6322 - Kylie

6393 - Stereophonics

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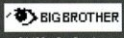
1815 - 007

31371 - The Simpsons



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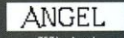
31424 - MTV



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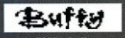

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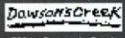
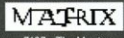


7594 - Dawson's Creek

7625 - Lord Of The Rings



7627 - The Matrix

7684 - Star Wars

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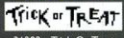
30084 - No Fear

30174 - Love Fool



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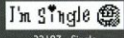
31251 - Bitch

31649 - No Network

31769 - Union Jack

32020 - Bad Boy

32149 - My Phone

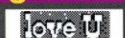


32197 - Single

7554 - WWF

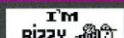
Picture Messages Picture Messages Picture Messages Picture

14071 - Mad Cat



40042 - Love U

40045 - No!



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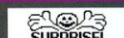
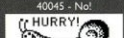


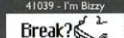
41041 - Surprise!

41268 - Champagne

41274 - Happy birthday



41284 - Hurry!



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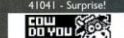

42041 - Cow Do You Do?

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Aktiv8

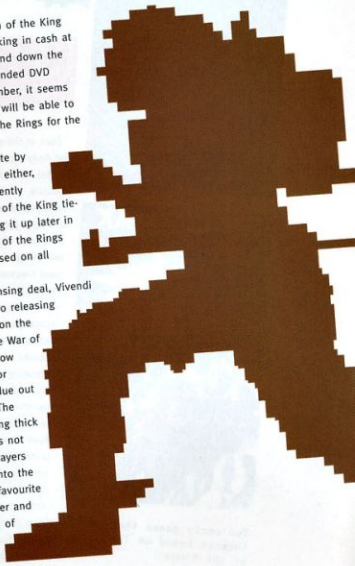
>return of the rings

From simple arcade games to complex adventures and sprawling battle sims, The Lord of the Rings has been a major source of inspiration for software developers for over 20 years. Martyn Carroll sets off on a journey to uncover the many games based on Tolkein's epic work

With The Return of the King movie still raking in cash at cinemas up and down the country, and the extended DVD release due in November, it seems that no mere mortal will be able to escape the Lord of the Rings for the foreseeable future.

You won't find respite by playing videogames either, because EA has recently released its Return of the King tie-in and are following it up later in the year with Lord of the Rings Trilogy, a game based on all three films.

In a separate licensing deal, Vivendi Interactive are also releasing PC games based on the original book; the War of the Ring is out now and The Battle for Middle-earth is due out in the summer. The games are coming thick and fast, but it's not the first time players have stepped into the shoes of their favourite Tolkien character and walk the world of Middle-earth.



Two early games that were loosely based on The Lord of the Rings

The bold and the not so beautiful

Back in the early 80s, long before the fledgling computer games market could be classed as an industry, publishers could not justify licensing costs so they dreamt up unofficial yet blatant titles. Games with titles like Return of the Jedy and Invasion of the Body Snatchas were common place. In 1982, Postern Software released the more subtly titled Shadowfax, an arcade game named after Gandalf's horse. Originally released on the Vic 20, and later appearing on the Spectrum and C64, the game saw the player ride the titular beast into battle against a never-ending stream of Black Riders. By hitting the fire button you could zap Sauron's servants with well-placed lightning bolts. There was no level structure as such, and the riders just kept on coming, making Shadowfax something of a one trick pony. The animation of the horses was excellent, however, being based on Eadweard Muybridge's famous photographs.

Shadowfax is a solid gold classic when compared to Moria – a game released in the same year on the Spectrum, C64 and Oric-1. You played Gandalf in this too and your aim was to retrieve Durin's ring from the mines of Moria. It sounded intriguing until you realised Moria was depicted as a 11x11 square grid and your position was marked with a letter G. As you moved from square to square you would stumble upon enemies. Here you could choose to fight or run and that was about as interactive as the game ever got.

As Moria shows, developers were never going to successfully visualise Tolkien's tale with these primitive machines, so the best games came in the form of text adventures. These games where often characterised by their complexity, although half the time, players struggled with the syntax rather then the puzzles themselves. Many games required you to enter exact phrases to progress, resulting in much thesaurus thumbing.

The very first text adventure, cunningly entitled Adventure, was loaded with Tolkien references. This influential game toured University campuses throughout the 1970s, eventually turning up on home computers (as Colossal Adventure) in 1981, courtesy of Level 9 Computing. By now it had gathered even more Tolkien lore, including trolls, elves and a volcano that was strikingly similar to Mount Doom. The game spawned two sequels, Adventure Quest and Dungeon Adventure, and the three adventures came to be known as the Middle-earth Trilogy. The games were later re-released under the Jewels of Darkness title and all of the Tolkien references were removed. This was no doubt due to the fact that Melbourne House had licensed Lord of the Rings from the Tolkien estate.

Following on from their successful adventure game based on The Hobbit, Melbourne House released Lord of the Rings Game One in 1985 on Spectrum, C64, Amstrad CPC, BBC, PC, Apple II and Mac. The game covered The Fellowship of the Ring (in the US the game was released as The Fellowship of the Ring Software Adventure), and was split into two parts like the book. In what was a first for an adventure

The rather cheeky Middle-earth Trilogy from Level 9 Computing

game, you could choose which character you wanted to play from Frodo, Sam, Pippin and Merry. Your selection didn't make a great deal of difference, but if you managed to complete the game (no small feat) you could play through again from different perspectives.

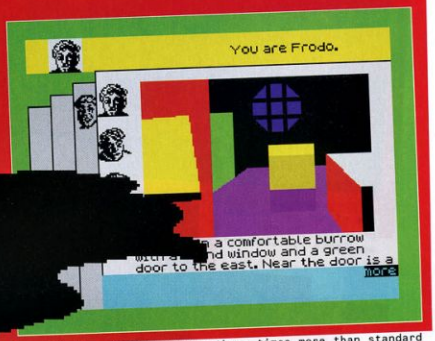
The game began in The Shire, where you were able to explore the Hobbit's homeland before setting off on your journey to Rivendell. In fact, it was possible to stray from the story and head in the opposite direction, over the Blue Mountains towards the forested planes of Harlingdon and the ocean beyond. So while the game followed the plot closely, it was possible to explore some of the places only mentioned in the book (or included on Tolkien's map of Middle-earth). The game threw in a number of unique plot twists too, so even fans were in for a few surprises. Saying that, at the time of release many fans were disappointed with the game, possibly because an in-depth knowledge of the book was not assumed. The text was riddled with grammatical errors too, making it look like a rushed job rather than a game that had been in development for 15 months. On a more general note, the game cost a staggering £16! However, it did come in fancy packaging with a paperback copy of The Fellowship of the Ring thrown in.

In 1988, Melbourne House released Lord of the Rings Game Two on the Spectrum, C64, Amstrad CPC, PC, Apple II and Mac. It was subtitled Shadows of Mordor and specifically covered book four of The Two Towers, following Frodo and Sam's quest rather than Aragorn's plotline. While not a great departure from the first game, it was certainly a lot more polished, with far fewer typing errors and improved graphics used to illustrate the text. Characters also displayed more independence. They would go off and do their own thing rather than follow you dumbly whilst singing about gold.

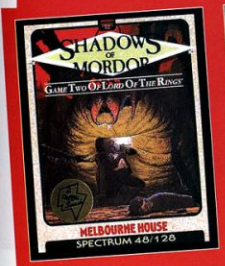
The company always intended to release a trilogy of games and the final instalment duly appeared in 1989. Subtitled The Crack of Doom, it covered the events in book six of The Return of the King, climaxing in the ring forging scene on top of Mount Doom. Unlike the first two adventures, you could only control Sam Gamgee but overall the game was a marked improvement over its predecessors. It was only released on the C64, PC and Mac, and rather strangely, the game was never released outside North America. The Tolkien Trilogy, released in 1989, actually consisted of The Hobbit and the first two Lord of the Rings games.

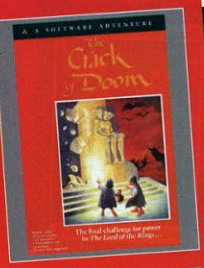
Speaking volumes

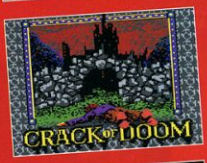
The PC and Amiga were home to the first fully graphical adventure game based on the book. It was entitled

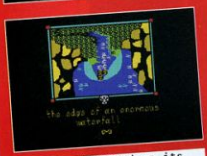


At £16, Game One was almost three times more than standard games at the time!









Game Two improved on its predecessor with better graphics and clearer descriptions

The third game in the trilogy was only ever released in the US, making it something of a novelty for UK fans

One of the rarest 2600 prototypes is now available for download

Lord of the Rings Vol 1 and was released by Interplay in 1990. It was similar to the early Zelda and Final Fantasy games in many respects. The action was viewed from overhead and the gameplay revolved around slaying enemies (wolves and wargs at first, spiders and sorcerers later on) and solving tricky puzzles. If you were stumped, you could always gain clues by engaging the local inhabitants in conversation. You started out controlling just a single character (Frodo) but as you progressed you were able to enlist the services of various dwarves, elves and humans. With a party of up to ten in tow, you could stage some spectacular battles later on. Lord of the Rings Vol 1 was an entertaining game which has aged far better than the earlier text adventure. However, like the Melbourne House games, the plot was not too linear, meaning that the player was not forced to complete tasks in a strict order (some tasks could be avoided completely).

Interplay followed up the game with an enhanced CD version (which featured scenes from Ralph Bakshi's animated movie), a SNES version and a very similar PC-only sequel titled Lord of the Rings Vol 2: The Two Towers. The follow-up shifted the emphasis from combat to puzzle solving and was better for it. This SNES version was interesting because while it shared the same name as the PC/Amiga version, it was a completely different game. It supported up to five players for a start, and there were loads of silly errands to run and mind-boggling mazes to explore. You could interact with non-playable characters, and level-up the members of the fellowship, but this was very much a light RPG. The game ended abruptly too, and the proposed SNES sequel never appeared.

The same fate befell the final part of the PC trilogy. Work was well underway on Vol 3 when it was unceremoniously pulled. The third game was to be more of a strategy game than an RPG, and it was very nearly released as part of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons' Forgotten Realms series before it was canned altogether.

The Interplay games used a series of stills to drive the story

Dead and buried?

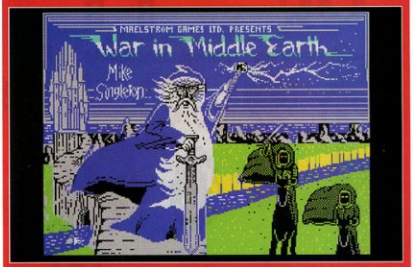
There is hope that Vol 3 may surface some time in the future, especially as a Lord of the Rings game written for the Atari 2600 has recently surfaced. This unreleased prototype, subtitled Journey To Rivendell, was originally scheduled for release in 1984 by Parker Brothers but never materialised, even though box artwork and screen shots appeared in one of their release catalogues at the time. Excited fans who phoned Parker Brothers were told that the game had sold out to cover up the fact that it had never been released. The prototype available on the Web is clearly unfinished, although some gameplay elements have been implemented. For instance, when the black riders attack, you can wear the ring to become invisible and dodge their attack.

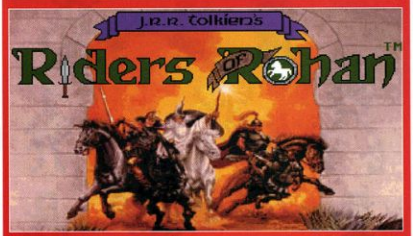
All this is a long way off the licences available now, but then again, both The Two Towers and The Return of the King games from EA are little more than polished versions of Golden Axe. Perhaps we haven't travelled that far after all! RG*

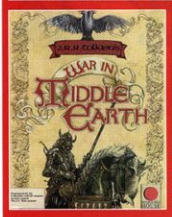
>war games.

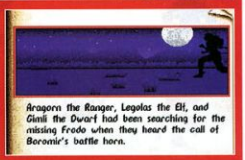
Melbourne House marched out War in Middle Earth in 1988, shortly before the release of The Crack of Doom. This turn-based strategy game was developed by Mike Singleton, author of Shadowfax and The Lords of Midnight (which was heavily inspired by The Lord of the Rings itself). Using an icon-driven interface, you had to guide Frodo and the fellowship from The Shire to Mount Doom. Along the way you would become embroiled in battles with Sauron's armies. The removed perspective distanced the player from the characters, who were, after all, just pixels on a huge playing field, yet the game certainly emphasised the epic nature of the novel. It was ahead of its time too, predating the similar Dune games by at least two years. The game was originally released on 8-bit machines (including the MSX) but later appeared on the PC, Amiga and Atari ST. These later versions benefited from enhanced visuals, including graphic sequences which showed the characters preparing for battle.

Beam Software, the Australian owners of Melbourne House, released Riders of Rohan on PC in 1990. This strategy game was similar to War in Middle Earth and began with the battle for Helm's Deep. There were a number of units you could utilise, including Frodo and Aragorn, but the battle engine was on the simplistic side. Besides making tactical decisions, there were also several action scenes in which you battled against orcs, either firing arrows as Legolas or swinging your axe as Gimli.









Aragorn the Ranger, Legolas the Elf, and Gimli the Dwarf had been searching for the missing Frodo when they heard the call of Boromir's battle horn.

These turn-based strategy sims were a welcome departure from the adventure games

>Wall of the Miner King.

Miner Willy is one of the most recognisable game characters ever, having starred in Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy, two of the most successful and influential games of the 8-bit era. Martyn Carroll takes a walk down Surbiton Way, following in the footsteps of the intrepid explorer

When we first considered putting together a retro magazine, talk about content, readership and the business side of things always led, in a roundabout fashion, to Miner Willy. Nostalgia is infectious, and meetings would be filled with musings about back in the day, when games were good. The frequency with which Miner Willy entered the conversation was alarming. Indeed, talk to any videogame veteran about classic games and they'll nearly always remember Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy with fondness. Miner Willy seems to strike a chord that cannot be ignored. And ignore it we won't.

Manic Miner

Manic Miner was originally written for the Spectrum by Matthew Smith and released by Bug-Byte Software in 1983. Smith was 18 at the time, and it was only his second commercial game (Styx being the first). His main inspiration was a game written for the TRS-80 called Miner 2049'er.

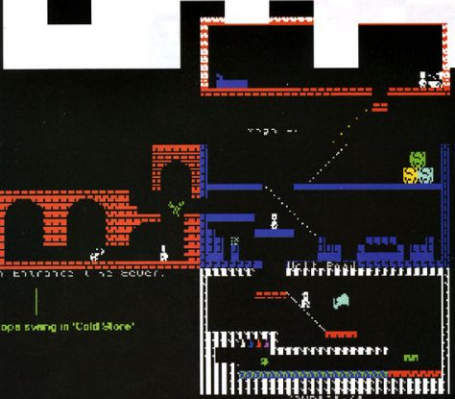
Miner Miner was immediately a huge hit, and perhaps the first Spectrum mega-game. It was released at a time when many Spectrum games were simple affairs, often written in BASIC. In contrast, Miner was a stunningly smooth machine code creation. It was also big, featuring 20 screens, an almost unheard of number. And the best bit – each screen was completely unique, and home to a variety of weird and wonderful enemies. There were no alien ships or ghosts here. Smith introduced clockwork robots, mutant telephones and man-eating toilets!

The game delivered a succession of firsts. It featured in-game music in addition to standard spot effects. Granted, the stunted version of In The Halls Of The Mountain Kings was continually looped, but it worked brilliantly. The game also featured an animated loading screen, with "Manic Miner" flashing as the tape played. Although this was a simple trick using flashing attributes, it was still a first for a Spectrum game. However, Manic Miner is perhaps best remembered for being the first very difficult game! You couldn't complete this in an afternoon. In fact, you probably would never complete it. There was a fair chance you'd lose your three lives before Eugene's Lair, and that was only a quarter of the way through the game. You could cheat, but this prevented you from completing the game properly.

Following the success of Manic Miner, Smith left Bug-Byte and formed Software Projects with two associates. A legal loophole allowed Smith to take Manic Miner with him and re-release it as a Software Projects game. Subtitled Second Edition, the game was virtually identical. A small number of character sprites were changed, and some excellent new inlay art was created, but it was the same game. But fans needn't have worried, as the true sequel was just around the corner.

Jet Set Willy

Jet Set Willy was scheduled for a Christmas 1983 release, but it slipped and eventually appeared in April 1984 (this would probably explain why the inlay says 1983 and the tape says 1984).



>perils of willy.

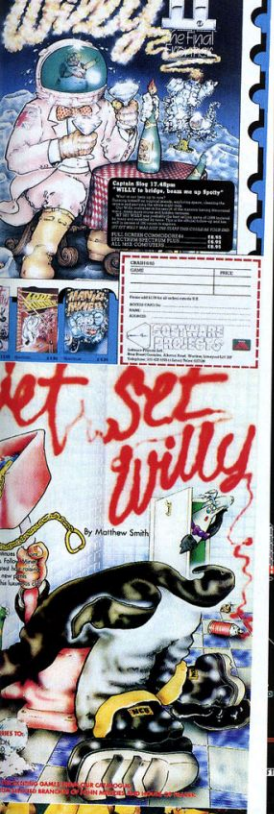
Neither Manic Miner or Jet Set Willy could be squeezed onto the Vic 20, so Software Projects set about creating a brand new Miner Willy adventure for the Commodore computer. The result was Perils of Willy, a Manic Miner clone with much cruder visuals. The aim was to jump from platform to platform, grabbing musical notes. Collect all the notes and you'd be taken to the next screen. It was a good step back from Manic Miner, and is only worth seeking out if you're a Miner Willy completist.

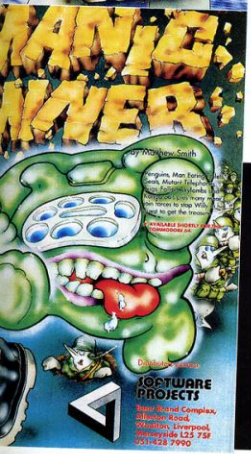
Jet Set Willy was not so much a sequel as a completely new game, in which Willy was let loose in a mansion containing 60 unique rooms. Unlike the original, there was no need to complete one screen in order to move onto the next. You could now explore! If one room looked a little tricky, why not leave it and come back later. If you were having trouble grabbing a tricky object, why not enter the room from the other side. The level of freedom offered was unprecedented, and the sheer scale was unparalleled. Jet Set Willy received rave reviews in the gaming press. Crash magazine called it "a high point in the development of the Spectrum game" and gave it 95% overall.

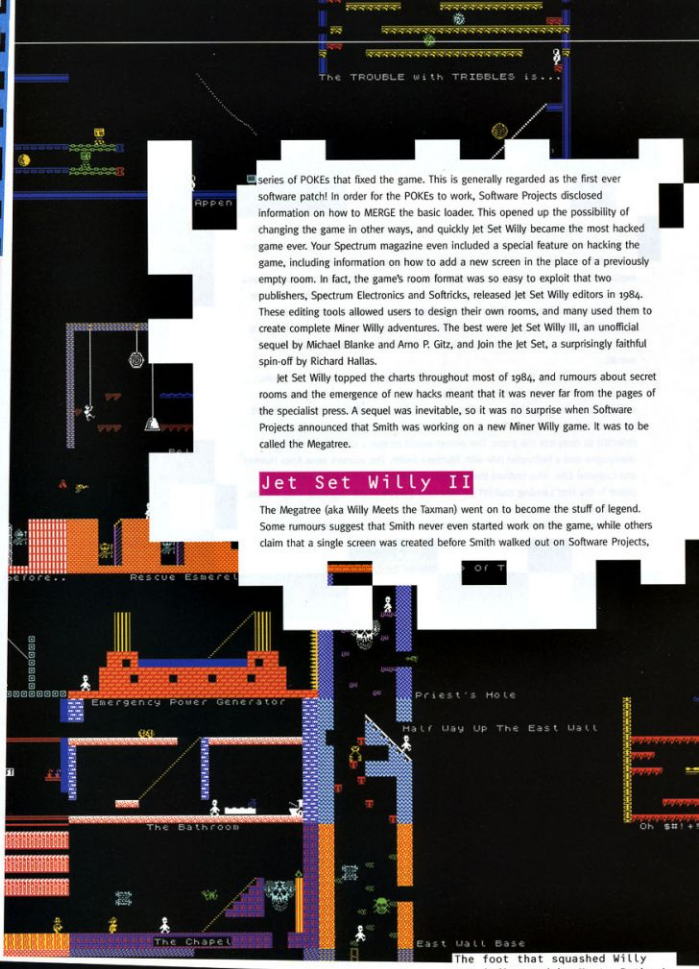
Like Manic Miner, it was very unlikely that you would ever complete the game, despite the seven lives you began with. Just visiting every room in the game was sufficiently challenging. Software Projects sensed this, and offered a prize to the first person to telephone their offices and tell them how many glasses needed to be collected to complete the game. The winner would receive a case of Don Perignon champagne and a helicopter ride with Matthew Smith. The winners were Ross Holman and Cameron Else, who realised that the game couldn't be completed, because an object in the First Landing couldn't be collected. So you could only collect 82 objects instead of the required 83.

Holman and Else won the prize nevertheless, and Software Projects released a

Manic Miner. Perhaps the only game in existence with three different covers!







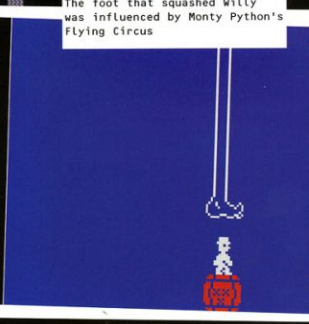
series of POKEs that fixed the game. This is generally regarded as the first ever software patch! In order for the POKEs to work, Software Projects disclosed information on how to MERGE the basic loader. This opened up the possibility of changing the game in other ways, and quickly Jet Set Willy became the most hacked game ever. Your Spectrum magazine even included a special feature on hacking the game, including information on how to add a new screen in the place of a previously empty room. In fact, the game's room format was so easy to exploit that two publishers, Spectrum Electronics and Softricks, released Jet Set Willy editors in 1984. These editing tools allowed users to design their own rooms, and many used them to create complete Miner Willy adventures. The best were Jet Set Willy III, an unofficial sequel by Michael Blanke and Arno P. Gitz, and Join the Jet Set, a surprisingly faithful spin-off by Richard Hallas.

Jet Set Willy topped the charts throughout most of 1984, and rumours about secret rooms and the emergence of new hacks meant that it was never far from the pages of the specialist press. A sequel was inevitable, so it was no surprise when Software Projects announced that Smith was working on a new Miner Willy game. It was to be called the Megatree.

Jet Set Willy II

The Megatree (aka Willy Meets the Taxman) went on to become the stuff of legend. Some rumours suggest that Smith never even started work on the game, while others claim that a single screen was created before Smith walked out on Software Projects,

The foot that squashed Willy was influenced by Monty Python's Flying Circus



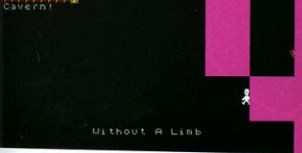
apparently after an argument over royalty rates. The fact is that Matthew Smith never wrote a sequel. That job was left to Derrick Rowson.

You can imagine the situation. The fans are crying out for a sequel and the man behind the series has gone AWOL. Software Projects needed something quick, and the solution was Jet Set Willy II: The Final Frontier. Released in July 1985, just over a year after the original, part II is best described as an enhanced version of Jet Set Willy.

Rowson took all 60 of Smith's rooms and added a further 71 rooms of his own, bringing the total number to 131. New rooms are dotted throughout the house, with the majority lying in the rarely-explored area beyond The Forgotten Abbey. However, the majority of new rooms were not in Willy's house at all. In the original game, if you made your way to the very top of the house, and jumped up from The Watch Tower, you'd be looped back around to The Off License. But in the sequel, you'd appear in The Rocket Room. This would then take you to a space ship from which you could beam down to an alien planet.

The main problem with Jet Set Willy II was that the new rooms were largely dull and boring. The author shared little of Smith's imagination, and apart from a few nice touches (Willy in a space suit being one of them), the sequel was something of a missed opportunity. Crash agreed, giving the game 61% overall and saying "Good, but not much progress."

However, the sequel's greatest strengths lay behind the scenes. Smith has squeezed every last byte out of the Spectrum to produce the original, and yet Rowson somehow managed to cram over double the amount of screens inside the 48K memory. To achieve this, Rowson created a compression algorithm that he used to scrunch the size of each screen. On the downside, this made the game much harder to hack, and very few modified versions of the sequel have appeared. RG*



>The Gaping Pit?

Many rumours surrounded Jet Set Willy, with the main ones relating to supposed secret rooms. This seems to stem from a reference in Smith's original code to a room called The Gaping Pit. Imaginations were on fire and the whole thing boiled over when Your Spectrum printed this letter from Robin Daines in issue seven:

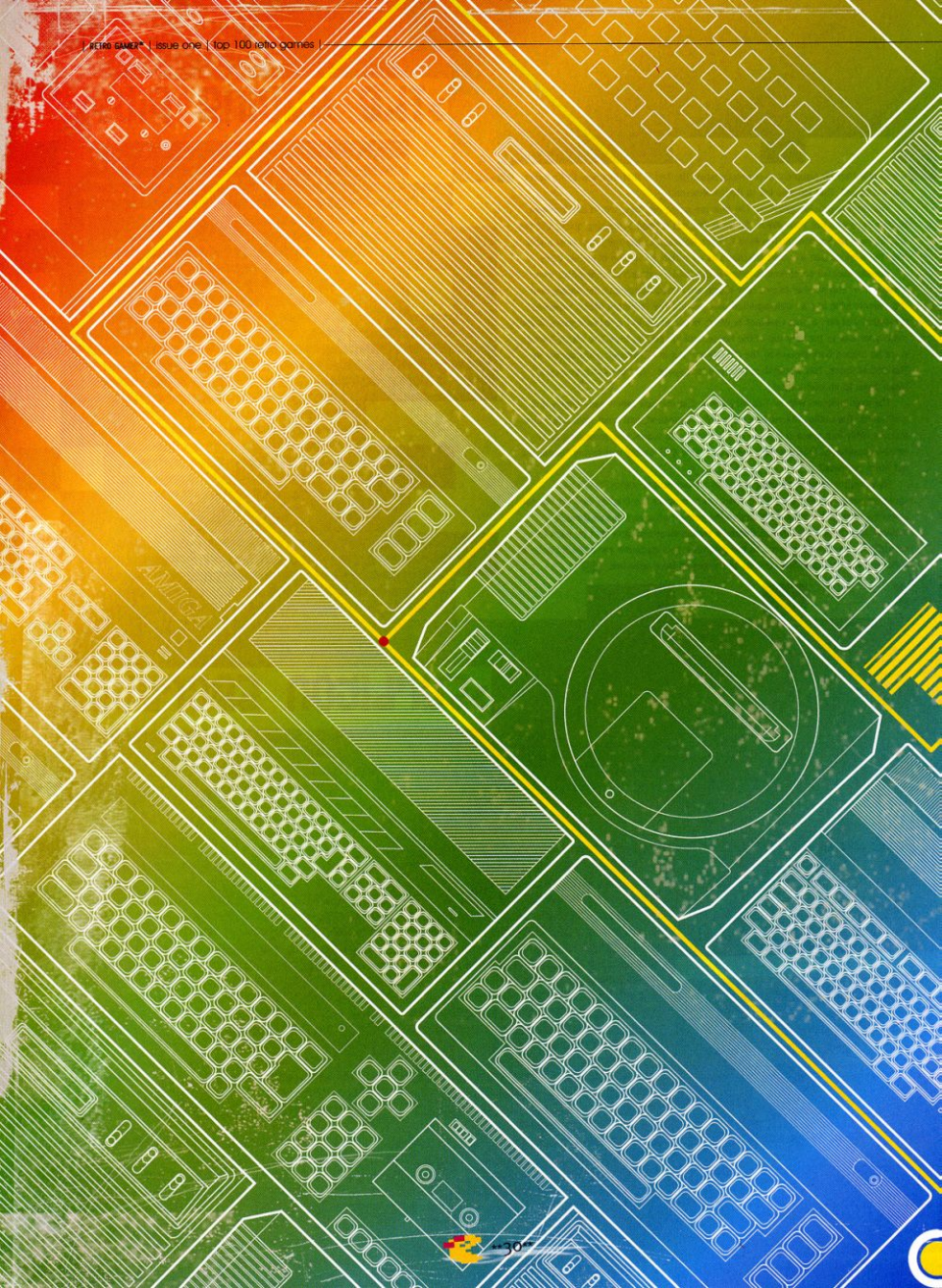
"Seeing your article in issue 4 about Jet Set Willy I felt compelled to write to you about some locations you've missed out. The Gaping Pit seemed the most obvious one, though even I haven't visited it. Secondly, and more importantly, you omitted three major locations; here's how you get to them. Wait on the bow till 11.45pm (Smith time), which may seem an awful long time to you swashbuckling Spectrummers. At that moment, a raft will get tossed up on a large wave and you must then jump on. It takes you to Crusoe Corner (a desert island to us landlubbers). Then you shin up a palm tree to arrive at Tree Tops – The Sequel, from which you catch the bird that travels up towards In The Clouds. From there you can control yourself all over the house (funny things happen when you try to enter the water or the Master Bedroom) and from that point, it should be possible to find The Gaping Pit (though I've not tried it myself). It also clobbers the 'Attic Attack' and makes it possible to go through baddies (fire puts you down where you are, so be careful) whereupon the bird disintegrates."

Your Spectrum countered with a sarcastic reply, about how they themselves had found even more secret rooms, but this was no doubt lost on countless readers, who waited and waited for that raft like Crusoe himself.

This hoax became so famous that Derrick Rowson actually included the desert island in Jet Set Willy II. If you flick the trip switch, and then make it to The Bow without losing a life, the yacht will take you to The Deserted Isle.

>Surbiton Secrets

- The JSW in-game tune is "If I was a Rich Man" from Fiddler on the Roof, although the version of JSW that appeared on the They Sold a Million compilation features In The Halls Of The Mountain Kings from Manic Miner. JSW II also features the Grieg's movement.
- There's a room in JSW called We Must Perform a Quirkafleeg. In case you're wondering, a Quirkafleeg is an act that involves lying on the floor and kicking your legs out. It comes from a comic Smith used to read called The Furry Freak Brothers.
- In the original JSW, you would die instantly if you entered We Must Perform a Quirkafleeg after visiting The Attic. It seems that the large caterpillar messed up some of the graphics, causing the crash. Software Projects released a POKE for this problem, although they claimed it was part of the game's design! Apparently, after visiting The Attic, Quirkafleeg filled with deadly gas, forcing you to find an alternative route.
- In JSW, the screen Nomen Luni is a mikey-take of the Nomen Ludi legend that appeared on Imagine's plane-shooting game Zzoom. And if you look at that particular screen, you'll see that a plane has indeed crashed into Willy's mansion.
- If you do manage to collect all 83 objects in JSW, Maria will let Willy retire to bed. But as soon as his head hits the pillow, he dashes to The Bathroom and throws up in the toilet! The ending to JSW II is even more devious, because it transports Willy to The Central Cavern. That's right – the first screen from MM. Perhaps it was a recurring dream after all.
- MM, JSW and JSW II were ported to many different machines, with some minor but interesting changes. For instance, the BBC Micro version of MM completely replaced the Solar Power Generator with a new screen called The Meteor Shower. Similarly, the Amstrad CPC version changed the layout of Solar Power Generator but the name remained the same. However, Eugene's Lair was renamed Eugene Was Here.
- The Commodore 16 version of Jet Set Willy only featured 20 screens, even though it was labelled "Enhanced Version". The furthest to the left you could go was the Back Stairway and the furthest to the right was The Bridge. The C16 version of JSW II included over 80 screens, but the game was a four part multi-load
- The Commodore 64 and Spectrum versions of JSW II were identical, expect that in the C64 port you could jump into the toilet at the start and visit several additional screens.
- Software Projects commissioned Atari ST and Amiga versions of JSW in 1989. The company later canned both versions, but the Atari ST version was finished, and has since found it's way onto the Web. It's a very faithful remake of the Spectrum version, although there are two new rooms – Buried Treasure and Zaphod Says: DON'T PANIC!
- Jester Interactive now own the rights to MM and JSW. A jazzed-up version of MM appeared on the GameBoy Advance in 2002, and there are plans to port both games to mobile phones.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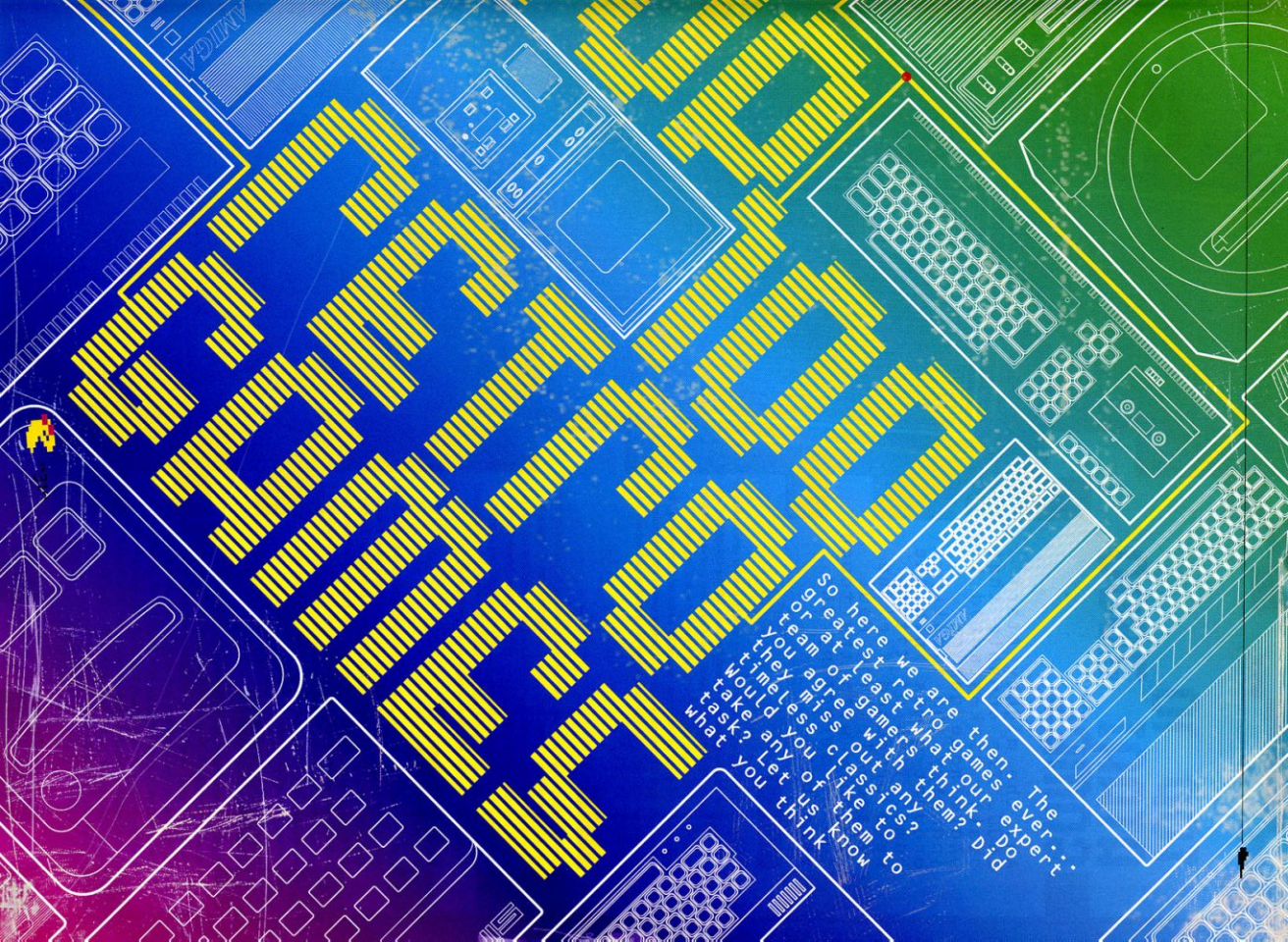
So here we are then. The ever...
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TOP 10 ATARI 2600 GAMES

Ah, the mighty Atari 2600. The console that really kick-started the whole home gaming industry and finally brought games into the home. Tons of titles were produced for the system, leaving Paul Loughrey with the tough job of selecting the very best

Pitfall

Back when static screens and wave after wave of identical enemies were considered the norm, Pitfall gave us a cheeky glimpse of the future. Offering a staggering 255 screens of side scrolling action, Pitfall placed you in control of your very own little Indiana Jones, and plunged you straight into the heart of a perilous jungle environment to seek out and claim lost treasure. Its innovative rope swinging, croc' leapin', log jumping action remains such a cult gaming formula that a ridiculous 3D remake is currently circling the PS2 bargain bins as I write. You can't improve on a classic.

Enduro

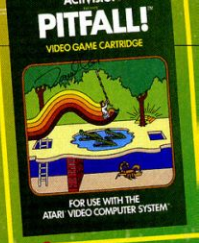
Forget your Gran Turismo and your Need For Speed, because Enduro had the best of 80's driving in the bag. A challenging course (featuring tight turns at breakneck speed around both left and right curves, mind you), and a ridiculous 200 cars to pass on your route to victory, Enduro pitted you against three of every driver's nightmares – fog, night driving and, erm, night driving in fog. Coming in close proximity with other racers would shunt you backwards bumper car style and could mean the difference between finishing first and not finishing at all.

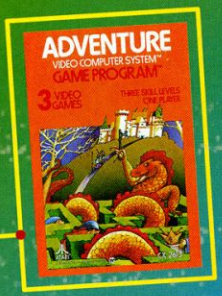
Adventure

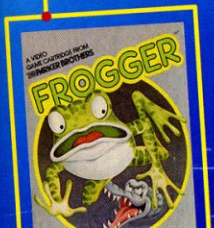
Originally a mainframe computer program that required hundreds of Kb of memory, Adventure was whittled down to a yellow square moving around mazes (some of which were 'dark' and only revealed piece by piece) in an effort to return a gold chalice to a castle, and avoiding the dragons. Although graphically simplistic, there were some nice touches (like seeing your square inside the hollow dragon's belly if you were eaten) and a heady challenge if all three dragons were to be successfully slain. It was also the first game to feature an easter egg, revealing the programmer's name on screen.

Plaque Attack

Probably not on everyone's all time favourites list, but those who remember Plaque Attack do so with tremendous fondness. It was basically Space Invaders, but the space arena was replaced with a mouth containing several teeth, and alien ships were replaced by evil tooth corroding foods like candy canes, burgers, hotdogs and more. Naturally, these invaders needed to be fought with a toothpaste ship, and the tube actually shrunk as you unloaded its fluoride goodness. Parents loved it for its hygiene educational benefits, and kids loved it because they got to shoot things without their parents on their back!







HERO

Another Indiana Jones inspired adventure, HERO gave you the excitement of placing dynamite and blowing away walls that might be blocking your path to victory. The main protagonist also had a cool gyrocopter so he could defy gravity and soar through perilous screens. The areas were lit by strange torches that could be inadvertently extinguished if you got too close, which threw in an extra element of danger as everything turned black and white. Of course, those without a colour television wouldn't notice the change. HERO was another classic of the 'die, retry' syndrome that forged gamers into the hardcore finger twitchers today's youth wouldn't know anything about.

Boxing

Rumoured to have been used as a training tool by Mohammed Ali, Boxing had a crazy top down view of the pugilists that meant only a head and two over-sized fists were required for the graphical illusion of being in the ring. The idea was to hit your opponent more than he hit you, within a timed round. There were no fancy blocks, counters and low blows with this little beauty – if you hit the head, you scored a point, if you hit the gloves, you didn't. Simple, but brutal entertainment.

Centipede

Who could forget the tears of frustration as the leaping spider obscured your shot at the scorpion, allowing the frantically charging centipede to reach the bottom of the screen and kill your valiant efforts in a second? Centipede was all about classic gaming. All the ingredients were there for the world to enjoy, from rapidly moving evil bugs, through bouncing spiders, to a landfill of crazy mushrooms – what's not to love?! There are variations of Centipede still being produced today, but few of them improve on the original and best version.

Defender

Side-scrolling laser-death from space, with a conscience? Oh yes. Defender saw you not only blasting otherworldly scum, but stopping off to rescue hapless colonists who were prone to being kidnapped by aliens and turned into mutants. Another game that's suffered the humiliation of a badly-made remake, Defender's true status lies in the original arcade version. The 2600's limited graphical prowess hampered some aspects of the gameplay, but for me, this remains more than a worthy addition to the top ten. The 'white noise' of the engine thrust still haunts me at night sometimes.

Frogger

Inspired by the French love of slimy amphibians, fused with an eco-friendly animal rights lobby and thrown into a melting pot of cars, swamps and deadly water, Frogger is still being adapted, reinvented and remade today. Ironically, Activision's Freeway was first off the mark with the whole animals crossing roads niche, but the charm of the two-legged croaker won through in the end. There was no end to the joy of seeing five of your frogs sitting safely in their home at the top of the screen, and replay value is a given, even today.

Phoenix

One of Atari's best arcade conversions for the 2600, Phoenix was the ultimate take on the whole Space Invaders theme. With a strategic element in the use of a shield, varied enemy waves that had decidedly erratic attack patterns, and the adrenaline buzz of defeating 'the mother ship', this game had it all. Evil birds would swoop and soar around the screen dropping far too many bombs for the less agile gamer to successfully avoid, and 'one more go' factor was at its peak with this one. There hasn't really been a space shooter since that can compare to Phoenix for adrenaline charged playability.

TOP 10 COMMODORE 64 GAMES

It was an argument that raged across playgrounds throughout the 1980s. Which was best, the Speccy or the C64? Ben Alsip was firmly in the Commodore camp, and here are what he considers to be the best C64 games ever

Turbo Outrun

"More Car, more road, more action" was the tagline of this all time racing classic, and boy was it right. Turbo Outrun ditched the old Ferrari in favour of the sexier F40 and dropped in more racing locales, more cops, more upgrades and more rubber burning action. This was Commodore 64 racing at its very best and was loved by everyone who played it. Special mention has to go to the soundtrack by the Maniacs of Noise, which was simply amazing back in the day. There have been other Outrun spin-offs since, but any aficionado knows that this is where it's at. It looked, sounded and handled like a dream. It even came with a free poster!

Monty on the Run

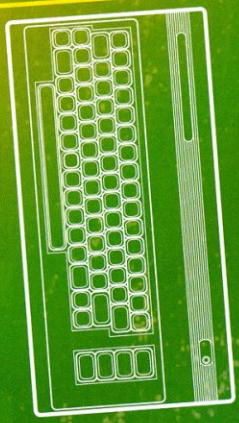
Monty Mole, an unlikely hero to say the least, but what a guy! The Monty Mole games were always popular, but Monty on the Run was the pinnacle of the series. The level design and larger than life characters were a joy to behold, and the Jet Set style of play had been tweaked to perfection. This was a time when enemies didn't need to be special-op soldiers or alien beings – we were more than happy with spinning beer glasses and steam-shooting kettles. Because of this zany approach, the game didn't have any pretences, it was just pure fun in a madcap platform world. And who could forget Ron Hubbard's mind-blowing music?

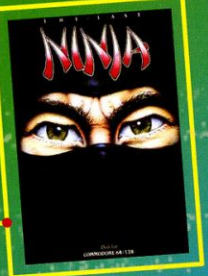
The Last Ninja

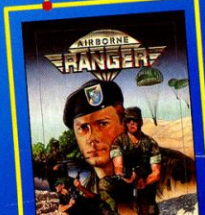
It's not often, even in these days of technical wizardry, that a truly original and impressive game comes along. The Last Ninja however, was a perfect example of such a title. As the lethal ninja Armakuni, you had to travel through the picturesque locations battling enemies and solving devious puzzles, all to reach, and defeat, the evil shogun Kunitoki. The graphics were simply stunning, with amazing attention to detail, and the animation of your black-clad assassin was silky smooth. The puzzles accompanying the proceedings were as hard as the proverbial nails (as was the whole game really), but any frustration was soothed away by the excellent soundtrack. The sequels may have tarnished the title somewhat, but the original title is still a classic.

Beach Head II

This was a game well ahead of its time. Instead of the usual side scrolling platformers or shooters, Beach Head II gave to a collection of different games in one neat package. Playing as either the courageous armed forces or the despotic dictator you had to fight for freedom (or continued oppression if you chose the later). The different stages offered vastly different challenges, from running for cover behind walls and planting traps for oncoming vehicles, to the absurd boomerang duel at the end of the game (huh!?). You could also indulge in some two player action for the ultimate in friend bashing. Quality stuff indeed.







The Great Giana Sisters

This was one of the first games to really kick up a storm of controversy, not for violence or drugs, but because of a certain moustachioed plumber. Giana Sisters was a blatant rip off of Mario Bros, and the game was practically identical but it had plenty of its own strengths. Instead of the fluffy cutesy approach of Mario, the Giana Sisters were edgier, looking like a cross between Barbie and a school girl hooker! As you ran along the side-scrolling levels, you could find power-ups that changed you between the two sisters, granting you the ability to squash your foes. Basically, this had all the good points of Mario, without the sickly sweet aftertaste. It's good to be bad sometimes.

Barbarian

Heads will roll – literally! Long before the Street Fighters and Tekkens of the world, this medieval Conan themed battler was spilling blood in living rooms the world over. Playing as a long haired beefcake with a bloody great sword, you had to fight a series of enemies before taking on the evil sorcerer Drax. Tons of moves, including the mighty Web of Death and spinning decapitation attack were accessible, and you even got a green goblin to clean up after you by kicking your foe's head off the screen! One or two players could battle it out as well. It also has to be on the shortlist for the cheesiest game cover ever made!

Arkanoid

Never before has a bat and ball, Pong-style game been so much damn fun! Arkanoid took the simplistic formula of Atari's classic and gave it a huge injection of steroids. In your quest to defeat the oddly named Doh (Homer need not apply), you had to beat the crap out of a collection of nicely arranged brick walls. You could obtain power-ups that made your bat longer, equipped it with lasers and even made the ball stick to it. These all gave you the edge you needed to battle through the game's many levels. Arkanoid has been done to death over the years, spawning tons of clones, but this is by far the best example around.

Delta

As far as side-scrolling shoot-em-ups go, Delta was quite simply one of the best, and still holds its own against all comers. Why? Because the design was so spot on and the game played so well that you couldn't put it down! It didn't really have spectacular visuals or anything truly special about it – it was just pure, unadulterated fun. In a time when shooters had set attack patterns and titles were more memory tests than true games, Delta shone out like a beacon. The alien attacks were excellent and the whole thing ploughed along with some excellent audio to back it up. R-Type may have stolen the fire, but Delta was the better game.

Airborne Ranger

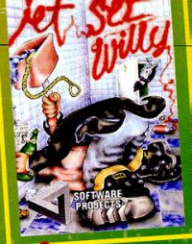
This was a definite precursor to many of today's tactical action titles. Airborne Ranger had some of the most innovative features of its day. As an elite solider you had to parachute behind enemy lines to undertake all sorts of missions. When planning your drop, you also had to choose where to drop your extra supplies, so you could pick them up in the field. To succeed in your mission, you'd have to make the most of your available weapons, as well as the scenery and cover. You could crawl along trenches to remain undetected, adding an early form of stealth play to the proceedings. Graphically this was an outstanding title, and it had more than enough original gameplay ideas as well.

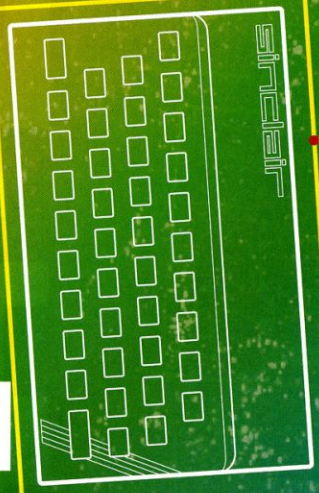
Rimrunner

From the makers of Barbarian came this technical marvel. Rimrunner not only featured the awesome discovery that was parallax scrolling, but it also let you control a cool alien warrior complete with his own trusty alien steed. As well as the parallax scrolling, Rimrunner also had some of the best animation around at the time. Romping around the alien landscapes was a joy, and the whole package just oozed quality. The above average audio also enhanced the experience. Some question how good the actual game itself was, but I think it's a solid gold classic.

TOP 10 SPECTRUM GAMES

Literally 1000s of games were released for the humble Spectrum, so the job of picking the best ten is a difficult one. Martyn Carroll takes up the challenge





Jet Set Willy

What else is there left to say about this classic title? Manic Miner redefined the platform game, but Jet Set Willy was the revolution that lead to countless clones and imitations. Smith's sequel was basically Manic Miner on a much grander scale. No longer did you have to progress through the screens in linear fashion. You could now go off and explore Willy's mansion at your own leisure. Not many people completed it (in fact, it was impossible to complete when originally released), but that was not the point. Jet Set Willy was all about exploration. Every room was a wonder, every second playing it a joy.

Turbo Esprit

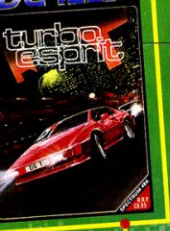
The best titles were always the ones in which you could create your own compelling mini-games. In Turbo Esprit, the main aim was to smash an international drugs ring operating in one of four sprawling cities. You waited for the drugs to be exchanged, then made the criminals submit by ramming their vehicle. This was good fun, with map reading skills being as important as cool driving moves, but the main draw was the ability to cause havoc on the city streets. Forget about the crims, let's run down pedestrians instead! There were even blokes up ladders that you could smash into. The fact that it was a living, breathing city – drivers stopped at traffic lights, pedestrians waited to cross the road at pelican crossings – made it all the more fun.

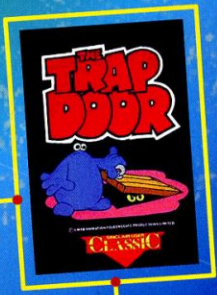
Robocop

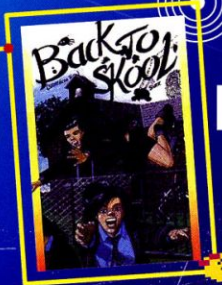
You'd seen the film, or at least your best mate or older brother had seen it and acted out every gore-soaked scene to your delight: "This guy gets covered in toxic waste, and he melts and then gets hit by a car and explodes!" You wanted more, and Ocean delivered it big time with this supremely polished arcade game. Like many of Ocean's later movie licenses, different gaming styles were employed throughout. Side-scrolling shooting levels formed the main guts of the game, but there were also first-person scenes and puzzle solving sections. It all hung together extremely well, and almost matched the film in the thrills and spills stakes. You couldn't deny its popularity either, as it topped the charts for the best part of a year!

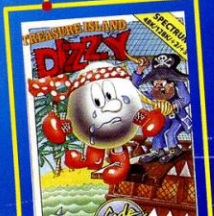
Bubble Bobble

This classic arcade game was released on just about every viable platform in existence. All ports were very good, and the Spectrum version was no exception. The aim was simple – blow bubbles to trap the baddies and then pop the bubbles to clear the screen. Over 100 levels of bubble bursting action awaited you, and the Spectrum version was incredibly faithful to the arcade game, right down to the tune that tinkled away while you played. Besides it being an excellent game, the main reason for its inclusion is that it's surely the finest two-player Spectrum game available.









The Great Escape

Loosely based on the Steve McQueen movie, The Great Escape cast you as a captive inside a German POW camp. Obviously your aim was to escape, but how you did it was entirely up to you. You see, there was a daily routine in place, starting with a morning roll call, followed by breakfast, then an hour in the exercise yard and so on. During each successive day you could build up an inventory of useful items to aid your escape. It was all about biding your time, getting the right gear and finally, choosing the right time to go under the fence. Overall, a brilliant challenge, and one that's still playable today.

Myth

You may have missed this one, as it was released towards the end of the Spectrum's long life. Thank God for emulation then, as *Myth* is a gem that shouldn't stay hidden. Subtitled History in the Making, you played a young lad thrust through several periods of history, including Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt. Your aim was to find orbs that would transport you to the next time and place. Rarely has a game melded action and adventure so well, and with such brilliantly colourful graphics.

The only downside was that there was no 128K version – just a 48K multi-load with no music. Still, don't let that put you off Myth – perhaps the last great Spectrum game.

Trapdoor

Woah! Look at those graphics! The characters take up almost half the screen! Those were the cries from astonished kids, gob-smacked by the sheer awesomeness of Don Priestley's Trapdoor. Based on the popular TV show, you played Berk and your job was to keep the Bad Tempered Thing upstairs happy by carrying out a series of gross tasks. To make things easier, various monsters lurking beneath the trapdoor would pop out and give you a hand. The puzzles were often absurd, and the solutions just as ridiculous, but Trapdoor was a richly entertaining game with a refreshing sense of humour. This entry is dedicated to colleague Dan Whitehead, who asked his parents for Trapdoor for Christmas, but received a book on how to program games instead. Harsh.

Target Renegade

Imagine returned to the software scene with Renegade and this, its superior sequel. Mr Big has kidnapped your girl and it's up to you and your brother to get her back. Yes, it's a bare-faced rip-off of Double Dragon, but which side-scrolling beat-em-up isn't. The beauty of Target Renegade was the two-player option. Fighting punks on your own was fun, but teaming up with a mate and busting heads together was bliss. The introduction of weapons made it all the more brutal, and the sombre soundtrack added to the atmosphere. Overall, Target Renegade embarrasses all other Spectrum brawlers. Go on – have a fight!

Treasure Island Dizzy

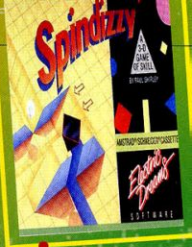
Choosing one of the Dizzy games is not easy – they're all so *similar* – but my vote goes to Treasure Island. Where as the first Dizzy was more of an arcade game, the sequel introduced the puzzle elements that became the mainstay of the series. Despite the colourful, cartoon visuals, it was pretty difficult, especially the task of finding the 30 gold coins (one, you may remember, was hidden behind a piece of bark in the tree house complex). The graphics were very good, the 128K version featured a catchy tune, and yet this great little game only cost £3. Three quid? That can't be right can it?

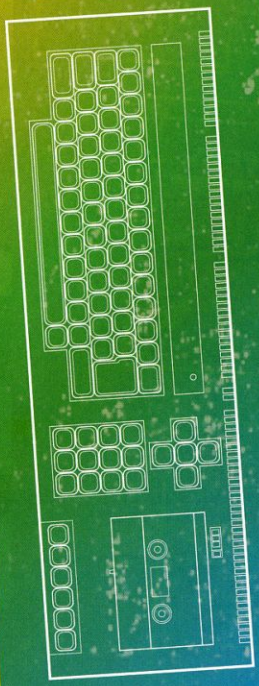
Back to Skool

The sequel to Skool Daze took the original game and timed everything by two. There were two schools (the girls' school next door could now be explored), twice as many puzzles and loads more opportunities for firing catapults and letting off stink bombs. Like other games in this top ten, the beauty of Back to Skool was that you could still enjoy it without trying to complete it. How many people tried to reach the Headmaster's safe and complete this game, and how many simply gave the teachers the names of their real teachers and ran around the school causing trouble? Either way, Back to Skool provided hours of undisciplined fun.

TOP 10 AMSTRAD CPC GAMES

While Sinclair and Commodore were battling it out for 8-bit supremacy, Amstrad entered the market with its CPC range. Steve McNally rounds up the best games to appear on this popular piece of kit





Spindizzy

Arguably the greatest game ever to appear on the Amstrad, Spindizzy put you in control of a spinning top called Gerald (why I never knew!) and sent you out to explore Hangworld – a crazy place made up of 386 locations where you had to solve some headscratch-worthy puzzles, negotiate fiendishly tricky terrain and somehow keep control of the furiously gyrating Gerald. Phew! Just stopping the 'kin thing spinning off the edge was enough to drive many gamers to drink, but once it clicked, a videogame experience that can only be described as pure genius awaited. Paul Shirley, sole programmer of Spindizzy, we salute you mate, wherever you are.

Get Dexter

When a new French publisher burst on to the scene with this stunning game, everyone sat up and took notice, convinced this was the birth of a new software star. Sadly they disappeared just as quickly as they arrived, and Get Dexter remains the only legacy of their potential. And brilliant it was too. You played Crafton – an android trying to escape a laboratory – and were aided by Xunk, a presumably drug-inspired foot with a head that helped you out every now and again. Each room was a puzzle that had to be solved before you could progress. Ingenious!

Elite

Elite is the game that created an army of addicts, hooking many into a compulsion to play video games that still hasn't left them. Me included. It's rare that a game this old can still claim superiority over everything in an entire genre that's come and gone since. Programmers are still trying (and failing) to recreate the open ended-ness and desire to just keep on playing that Elite possessed and I'm not sure anyone ever will. If you've never played Elite, but consider yourself a gamer, then you owe it to yourself to see what all the fuss is about!

Alien 8

Everyone's got their own favourite Ultimate game, but for me there's none finer than their space epic Alien 8. Okay, so it was rock hard and only the most skilful and persistent player would have any chance of seeing the end, but so what? In these days of games that you can easily finish without ever getting stuck, it's refreshing to step back in time to an era when actually getting good at it was what counted! Alien 8 still looks fantastic with style oozing out of every pixel, and with gameplay to die for, what more could you want? Gaming doesn't get much better than this!

Highway Encounter

Think Daleks meet Lemmings and you'll get an idea of what this puzzle shooter was all about. Now it may not look much, even for a near twenty year old program (especially being largely monochrome), but blimey, if there's not a blinding little game in there! You controlled the leader of a team of Daleks... sorry, Vortons, and had to guide the less intelligent drones behind you through a series of obstacles along a highway that stretches for thirty zones! Danger lurked around every corner (figuratively speaking, because the highway itself was like a Roman road!), and to get your team to the end you needed the reflexes of a particularly sharp cat.

Jack the Nipper

If you were the naughty kid in class then this was the game for you – the more havoc you caused, the more successful you were in Jack the Nipper! This game from Gremlin was harmless, Beano-esque fun as you guided Jack around the town, causing minor bother, but nothing serious like mugging old grannies. Or rape. Just for example. If Jack got caught by an adult they'd give him a good hard spanking! Yeah, the game was tough, but it was chuckles ahoy throughout this classic.

Barry McGuigan Boxing

Hitting the Amstrad like a jackhammer in 1985, Barry McGuigan Boxing was captivating like no other sports game that had gone before. Simulating the life of a boxer in staggering depth (for the time), this Activision masterpiece gave you the weeks before the fight to prepare – and long weeks they were of gruelling, intensive preparation. You even got to be a little bit Don King and choose your next opponent, working your way up the top twenty list, knocking over the likes of Werewolf Brown, BoomBoom Bertie and Shamrock O'Leary until you got to fight the 'wee man' himself for the world title! If you fought well, you'll even get the crowd on your side. This one was a real knockout!

Batman

This obviously Ultimate-inspired isometric platform puzzler may not be as well respected as the likes of Knightlore, Sabre Wulf and the mighty Alien 8, but that's something of an injustice, as it's still the best Caped Crusader game ever – even 18 years on! Hang your heads in shame, programmers of today! Okay, so the Batman sprite looks camper than Dale Winton at a gay pride fancy dress party, but you've got to remember this was based on the Adam West gay-a-thon that was popular in the 70s. So leave your heterosexuality at the door, find the pieces to reassemble the Batmobile and go rescue Robin! Kapow! Great game and a real challenge.

Ghostbusters

Everyone remembers this for the bouncing ball karaoke version of Ray Parker Jr's seminal theme tune that was the catalyst for many a raucous sing-a-long (in my house at least). The game itself sparks debate as to whether it was a classic or merely a cynical attempt to cash in on the success of the film. I reckon the former. You were charged with heading up a Ghostbusters franchise, responsible for buying the equipment and running the business, as well as the bread and butter daily grind of busting ghosts. And it was all nicely done, with enough depth to keep you interested and enough difficulty to challenge you all the way up to the thrilling finale at the Temple of Zuul.

Way of the Exploding Fist

Any fighting game you play today owes a debt to the mighty Way of the Exploding Fist. You controlled a single fighter in a karate tournament that took shape as a series of one-on-one scraps, with the ultimate aim being to reach 10th dan (a feat which, to my enduring shame, I never managed). There were 18 moves available to you, which may not sound a lot by today's standards, but back then it was revolutionary. Even more jaw-dropping was the depth. You see, in WOTEF, one hit was enough to win, so strategies like counter attacking, blocking and picking the right move for the right time were crucial – and nothing like it had been done before.

TOP 10 BBC GAMES

Did your parents reckon you'd be best equipped to cope with the fast-computerising world if you used the same machine at home that you were forced to use at school? Yes? Then you'll have been a BBC kid, like Dave Cusick

Elite

Possibly the most famous computer game of the 1980s, Elite first saw the light of day on the BBC – and although it went on to appear on virtually every computer format in the known universe, the original BBC version is still regarded as being one of the best. Casting you as a Han Solo-esque space rogue, buying and selling goods, fighting space pirates and undertaking missions in exchange for cash, this vector-graphics wonder provided hours of interstellar action and spawned countless imitators down the years.

Barbarian

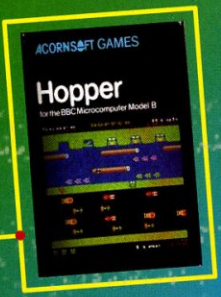
Barbarian was most famous for having a box cover featuring muscle-bound Michael van Wijk (later to become TV Gladiator, Wolf) standing, sword aloft, over the scantily clad page 3 star Maria Whittaker. In actual fact though, it was an excellent one-on-one fighting game. It also broke new ground for computer games by allowing you to gruesomely cut off your opponent's head with, like, blood and guts and everything. There was a sequel too, though it was basically more of the same, and by that time the smart kids were too busy obsessing over Sam Fox anyway.

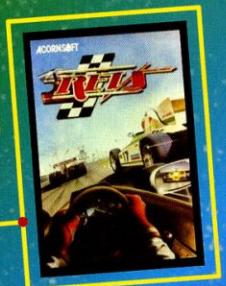
Hopper

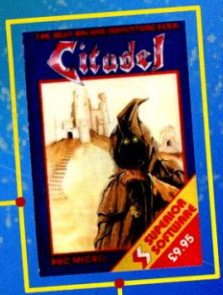
Acornsoft produced cracking conversions of a host of arcade games, including Boxer (Q-Bert), Arcadians (Galaxians), Meteors (Asteroids), Planetoid (Defender) and Snapper (PacMan). The most addictive of all though was surely this beautifully presented Frogger clone. Your task was to guide five frogs across a busy road, dodge a snake on the riverbank and then hop from log to log on the fast-flowing river to reach a safe hiding place on the far side. If you managed it, you got to do it all again, but with faster cars and fewer logs. It was one of those truly exceptional games that everyone in the family could play and enjoy.

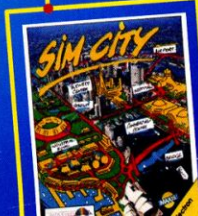
Codename Droid

Superior Software was the most prolific BBC publisher of all, and cranked out literally dozens of top-quality arcadey platform adventure games. Codename Droid was the sequel to the sideways-scrolling runny-shooty actionfest Stryker's Run, and saw you guiding John Stryker through a huge cave complex in search of, um, collectable items of some sort. Ahem. The graphics were pretty special for their day, and like so many of Superior's platform romps, it was addictive as hell.









Revs

Arguably the best driving game ever produced on an 8-bit computer, Revs was programmed by Geoff Crammond, who would go on to code Stunt Car Racer on the ST and Amiga, and the legendary Formula One Grand Prix on ST, Amiga and PC. (He didn't just write driving games though... anyone remember Sentinel?) Revs was a Formula 3 sim, and like all Crammond's driving games it combined great realism with awesome playability. It was tough as old boots, but if you could actually get around the six real-life courses, the sense of satisfaction was immense.

Thrust

A true gem, Thrust saw you pilot a spaceship down into complex cave systems. The objective on each level was to retrieve a pod (which would then swing around wildly underneath your ship and play havoc with the controls), then blow up a reactor and beat a hasty retreat into orbit before the whole rock went boom. With a limited fuel supply, limpet guns taking pot-shots at your dinky craft, and sliding doors to contend with, things could get tricky pretty fast. When you completed the six levels in the original game, you attempted them again with gravity reversed. And if you did that... well, you just did the whole lot again!

Citadel

Colossal and challenging, Citadel was a gem of a multi-screen platform adventure game which saw you trying to escape from a vast castle. There was plenty of find-the-right-key type puzzle solving, lots of leaping from one ledge to another, and so many screens to explore that if you didn't make a map, quite frankly you'd be screwed. Want to relive the adventure by taking a look at that map? Visit **www.rubybay.com/users/drbeeb/ superior.html** where it's been preserved for posterity.

Repton

A Boulderdash clone which proved so addictive and popular that it spawned a host of sequels, Repton was one of the games which originally put Superior Software on the map. The eponymous alien had a big green head, bright yellow jumper and red hands and legs, making him one of the most distinctive computer game characters of his day. This classic title was followed by Repton 2, Repton 3, Around the World In 80 Screens, Repton Through Time and others, but essentially they were all pretty much the same game with different levels. In fact, several of the games came with editing tools so that you could construct your own fiendishly complicated levels. Superior Software is still producing versions of Repton for various platforms including the PC, various PDAs and even mobile phones – find out more at **www.superiorinteractive.com/repton/**

Sim City

By the time Sim City appeared on the BBC at the start of the 1990s, the ST and Amiga had well and truly supplanted 8-bit machines in many homes, and Superior Software was pretty much the only major publisher still supporting the good old Beeb. The most astonishing thing about the BBC incarnation of this classic city management game was that it managed to pack virtually all the features of the ST and Amiga versions into just 32K. Yes, the graphics were utterly hideous and controlling the game with a keyboard wasn't nearly as easy as using a mouse on the 16-bit machines, but Sim City's fantastic gameplay was there in its entirety, making this a true BBC classic.

Exile

Probably the last truly great game to have been originally developed for the BBC, Exile was such a massive hit that it was later converted to the ST and Amiga. It was a scrolling platformy arcade adventure which was not only enormous, but boasted innovative features such as speech (on the BBC!), monsters who reacted to sounds you made, and a wide range of open-ended puzzles which could be solved in a variety of ways. It was supplied with a little novella explaining the background story, and there was a cash prize on offer to the first person to complete the game. A true classic.

TOP 10 SEGA MEGADRIVE GAMES

The Megadrive, Sega's first 16-bit console, launched in the UK in November 1990. Aaron Birch received one that very Chirstmas, and has been a fan ever since. He even bought a Saturn. Still, his fevered love for all things Sega has earned him the right to comment on the best Megadrive games ever made

Sonic 2

Sega's spiky blue mascot was one of the main reasons to own a Megadrive. The original was great, and took everyone by surprise. But, it was the second instalment that really shone. Sonic 2 was bigger and better than the original, and Sonic now looked like a true hero. Tails was introduced, and Sonic got his funky new speed dash. The level design in Sonic 2 was superb too, and although the game was fantastically easy, it was appealing nonetheless. Who could forget the thrill you got when you fought metal Sonic in the Death Egg, or when Dr Robotnik jumped into his huge robot? And then there was the '3D' bonus round. The following Sonic games varied in quality, but Sonic 2 was the best of the bunch.

Road Rash II

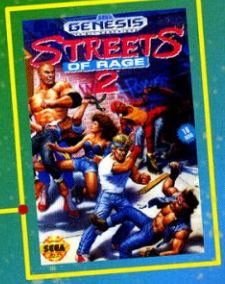
Speed, bikes and violence – what a combination. Road Rash II was a buzz game in the truest sense of the word. Racing down America's highways on your trusty hog, avoiding traffic, and wrapping a chain around the necks of other racers was just so satisfying. And the sound of a police siren genuinely filled you with dread. You got a real sense of achievement when you upgraded to a new bike, and it was a genuine challenge to actually win a race. The graphics were great, and despite the grating midi-rock music, there was simply no faulting the mix of racing and combat.

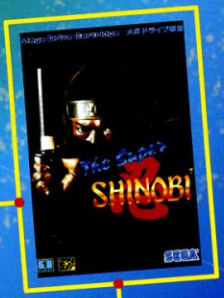
Shining Force

RPGs have always been a niche genre. You either love them, or you hate them – it's that simple. Shining Force broke this mould, and spliced the RPG genre with the classic strategy of chess. This mix created an amazingly absorbing title that held you in an iron grip until you got to the end. Recruiting new warriors and putting together the perfect army, while advancing the story and exploring the numerous towns and villages was captivating. Shining Force was huge, difficult and rewarding. It oozed class, and had tactical gaming goodness by the bucket load.

Gunstar Heroes

Ohhhhh yes! This was perhaps the greatest game on the Megadrive, ever! Gunstar Heroes was so damn impressive that you couldn't believe the humble Megadrive was pumping it out. People said the MD couldn't do





sprite rotation, people said it couldn't scale graphics. Well, they were wrong! Gunstar Heroes had all the graphical tricks in the book in one huge roller coaster of amazing boss battles. Some of the most memorable bosses ever appeared here, such as Green's transforming robot and the Pinky Roadster. Black's fortress was also unforgettable. In a word, fantastic.

Streets of Rage II

When Streets of Rage II appeared, people just couldn't fathom how such a game was possible at the time. It just looked and sounded so good. Huge characters, tons of enemies and a killer soundtrack made it a sensory treat. The 16Mb cartridge was used to the full, and the side scrolling fighting antics of Axel, Blaze, Skate and Max was stirring stuff. This was a game that made SNES owners jealous (although they'd never admit it). Aside from Final Fight, very few games have come close to recreating the feel of SORII. This was simplistic gameplay that worked perfectly. Grand Upper!

ThunderForce IV

The days of the SNES and MD saw the side scrolling shooter at its very best, and ThunderForce IV was the best of this breed. Graphically, nothing could touch it, and sonically it was an adrenaline pumping heavy metal explosion of the highest calibre. ThunderForce IV had it all. It had great weapons, stunning looks, rock hard game play and the best soundtrack around. This was a game that actually made you tingle with excitement, especially when the sirens sounded for the boss and the guitars kicked in! Bliss.

The Revenge of Shinobi

This side scrolling ninja-fest was so good, even Spiderman wanted in on the action. As a game, Revenge of Shinobi was deceptively simple but brutally addictive. Slinging throwing knives and jumping around like a madman was great fun. The challenge offered was perfectly balanced. It was hard, but playable, and you never considered that you couldn't beat that troublesome boss (even the Terminator). The sequel was also superb, but this was the original and best.

Dragon's Fury

Pinball games have always been a hit and miss affair. They succeed or fail on the ball physics and table design. Dragon's Fury (aka Devil Crash) was the perfect example of how to create the ultimate pinball game. The mix of classic pinball with the added mini-games was perfect. The physics were spot on and you couldn't stop yourself having that 'one more go' to beat the high score. This was an underrated pinball gem, and has rarely been bettered.

Jungle Strike

Desert Strike may be the most famous, and the first, but it was with Jungle Strike that the series hit its golden age. Jungle Strike, at the time, was huge. It had tons of missions and let you control multiple vehicles (including a stealth bomber). Missions were varied and challenging, but never got overwhelming. Graphically it was a scorcher, and the attention to detail was spot on. Jungle Strike was as ahead of Desert Strike as Doom was ahead of Wolfenstein. And it was never toppled, even with the various next-gen versions.

QuackShot

This slow paced platformer, starring none other that Donald Duck (and his nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie) was a woefully underrated game. Although many games magazines gave it rave reviews, it never really became a hit with the public. Despite this, the mix of excellent visuals, absorbing and challenging game play, great level design and the clever use of sink plungers (!), produced a classic platform adventure that was as good for kids as it was for the older gamer. Without a doubt, one of the best Disney tie-ins produced, even now.

TOP 10 SNES GAMES

Charles Brigden was so eager to play Super Mario World that he imported the original Super Famicon from Japan. This and similar acts of Nintendo love by Charles make him the ideal candidate for compiling a list of best SNES games

Super Mario World

The launch title for the SNES managed to serve two purposes: show gamers the true power of Nintendo's console, and give us the best Mario game ever. Make no mistake, Super Mario World was a stone cold classic. It's not about the amazing look the game has, with the SNES palette providing a very colourful style. It's not about the new characters, such as Yoshi, everybody's favourite dinosaur (after Barney). No – it's about the sheer joy to be had as you plough through all 96 levels. Super Mario World gives you enough thrills, chills and spills to make Sonic choke on his cornflakes. A world beater.

Super Mario Kart

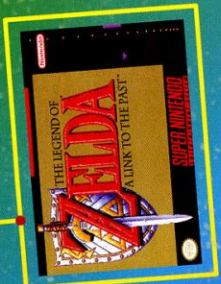
Speaking of world beaters... be honest, is any game out there more fun than Super Mario Kart? Eight characters, loads of tracks, tons of weapons. If you played this game and didn't enjoy it, it's time to pick a song and a flower arrangement, because you are officially dead. The single player mode was fantastic, with four different cups to compete for over three speeds. However, SMK really came into its own in multiplayer. The two-player split-screen racing mode was excellent, but few things were better than sitting back on a Sunday afternoon and obliterating your best mate in battle mode.

Street Fighter II Turbo

SNES fans were happy enough that their console already had the home version of Capcom's original heavyweight fighter, Street Fighter II. However, they were about to get happier than George Bush in a tank when Nintendo's console was graced with the latest update in the series, Street Fighter II Turbo. Beefed up moves, funky new outfits and faster than a cheetah on speed, Capcom's smash captured the attention of a generation and kicked the ass of all other fighting games, even at the huge price of £59.99. Many begged for it, some stole it, but everyone just had to have it. The best fighting game ever.

Starwing

Starwing was the first game to feature Super FX – a special chip hidden inside the game cart that allowed the SNES to handle complex visuals. The result was a game with amazing pseudo-3D graphics. Add this to a mind-blowing soundtrack and the result was a game in which the presentation was second to none. It wasn't all about style though, 'cause Starwing was also an incredibly intelligent shooter. The difficulty level was sky high too, so you certainly wouldn't be completing this in an afternoon. Overall, Starwing was a milestone in gaming. Shame the updated versions can't match the pure genius of the original.



Zelda: A Link to the Past

One of Nintendo's many iconic characters, there was no question that Link would be heading to the SNES. However, this was Zelda like you had never experienced. A much larger world, taking on the birds-eye view from the first Zelda game, it was the perfect mix of puzzle solving and sword play. The game also used the advantage of the SNES graphical power and colour palette, and produced the best looking Zelda game ever. These days, Ocarina of Time and The Wind Waker may look better, but they'd still be hard-pressed to beat A Link to the Past in the sheer playability stakes.

Pilotwings

Nintendo's games have always bought new ideas to the table, and Pilotwings was no exception. There were no pipes to pass through and no bosses to blast out of the sky. No, Pilotwings was all about learning to fly. You may remember it from the heady days of GamesMaster, as it seemed to be featured on that programme all the time, but Pilotwings was possibly the most underrated game on the system. Take control of hang gliders, jet packs, and even parachutes and pit your wits against nature and the elements in a whole host of fun challenges. Taking full advantage of the Mode-7 SNES graphics, Pilotwings was graphically stunning and overall, one of the console's best titles.

Super Probotector

Known as Contra III: The Alien Wars in other countries, Konami's Super Probotector took the humans from the overseas versions and replaced them with robots. However, luckily for us the underlying game still remained – and what a game it was. Probably the best action game on the SNES, Super Probotector placed you against an impending alien invasion, with some of the craziest bosses you've ever seen. Using Mode-7 to the hilt, Probotector saw you side-scrolling through ruined cities and huge battlegrounds, before shifting into pseudo-3D isometric viewpoints. An absolute classic.

Donkey Kong Country

They'd brought Mario along, they'd brought Zelda. Hell, they'd even brought Kirby, so the big N finally saw fit to bring one of their oldest characters to the SNES. And what a way to do it! People were literally blown away when they saw Donkey Kong Country, and even more astonished when they played it. Originally planned for the N64, the game was brought to us by the geniuses known as Rare, and was a huge leap forward, creating proper CGI-style graphics on a 16-bit console. Brilliant levels, great mini-games and the most fun to be had since Super Mario World, Donkey Kong Country proved that when it came to platformers, the SNES had no equal. Not even that damn hedgehog.

Super Metroid

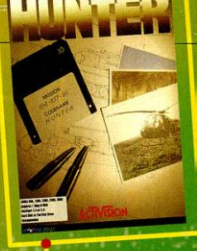
Nintendo has always had a habit of recycling its franchises for its consoles, so it was inevitable that Samus Aran would appear at sometime. However, when she did appear (in an oversized box), it was worth the wait. While still keeping the side-scrolling format of the previous games, Super Metroid had an amazing depth, taking advantage of the machine's extra power. Innovative and intelligent, Super Metroid was absolutely huge, so Nintendo just had to include a free walkthrough with it (hence the gigantic box). It was a title to show people who said Nintendo only made games for kids.

Super Tennis

I hate tennis. I've never liked it, and I bloody hate Wimbledon. So it's probably strange to see this game on the list, but the fact is that Super Tennis stole so much of my youth that I'd be betraying myself if I didn't include it. Featuring none of this 'sponsored/endorsed by whoever' crap, Super Tennis was a fun and somewhat simple look at the game. The graphics were very bright, with cartoony caricatures of the players, and the controls were absolutely spot on. It was incredibly fast for its day, and like so many SNES games, two-player mode was double the fun. Just brilliant.

TOP 10 ATARI ST GAMES

Ask someone to champion the ST and they'll usually bang on about its built-in MIDI ports, and how many big names in the music biz used the machine. Ask Anthony Howes and he'll tell you it was also a great games machine...



Hunter

In a time when 3D games were still very much in their infancy, and complex large scale gameplay was almost unheard of, Hunter came as an explosion of total awe. Putting you in the shoes of a highly trained soldier in the midst of a power struggle engulfing a complex archipelago, the game was far ahead of its time. You could roam around the 3D world, doing whatever you wanted, whenever you wanted. Is that a car? Grab it. Do I see a speed boat? I'll have that. The total freedom meant you could drive and pilot all the vehicles in the game, and perform all sorts of stunts. With all of this freedom came plenty of missions and a steep challenge to boot. To put it simply, Hunter was pure class.

Starglider II

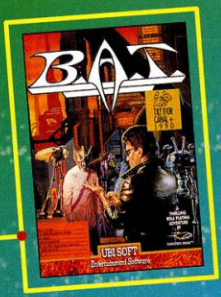
Another 3D title that saw beyond the technical limitations of yesteryear, Starglider II was a super smooth blend of space combat and exploration that flowed seamlessly along in total real time. You piloted your craft around the various planets, engaging various baddies and diving through the underground mazes of tunnels in a bid to complete your mammoth quest. When necessary, you could jet off-world into the black void of space and travel to other planets in the game universe. Another title that offered a glimpse of what the gaming world had in store for the future, Starglider II was breathtaking for all the right reasons and really pushed the 3D envelope. Watch out for those space whales!

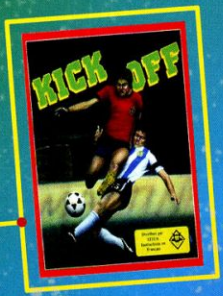
B.A.T

Without doubt one of the most underrated games of all time. B.A.T was a stunning graphical adventure set in a futuristic sci-fi world where you played the role of a top secret operative on the trail of a wanted felon. Using the point and click interface, you had to wander around the cyberpunk locales, conversing with people, trading and fighting any would-be attackers. B.O.B grafted into your wrist! B.A.T was not a hit when released, but for the lucky ones who did get the game, there was a deep and involving title to be found. You even got a special sound cartridge with the game that had to be plugged in to get the full music performance!

Kick Off

Before the days of Sensible Soccer came Anco's Kick Off. And by the gods was it good. Kick Off was fast, furious and played like a dream. Instead of relying on the then popular pseudo 3D, side-on view, Kick Off ditched it in favour of the more simplistic top down camera. This made it possible for the developers to concentrate of the beautiful game, and get the physics and nuances just right. In single player the game was great, but with a friend controlling the rival team, it really came into its own.





Carrier Command

Carrier Command saw you taking control of a powerful aircraft carrier-type ship that was outfitted with a fleet of amphibious tanks, aircraft and a huge deck gun. Your job – to combat enemy units that had made their homes on the various islands dotted around the world. You actually took control of the ship and the other vehicles and had to plan your attacks carefully and tactically. Graphically very basic, Carrier Command had more than enough strategy and combat to make up for any shortcomings.

Zak McKracken

Think of a point and click adventure and we can almost guarantee that Monkey Island is the first game to spring to mind – and perhaps rightly so. But, back in the day, there was much more activity in the genre, and Zak McKracken was one excellent alternative. A sequel to the already popular Manic Mansion, Zak took the formula to even greater heights. The graphics looked great, the humour was abundant and the puzzles were devious. Over time, the adventure genre has lost a lot of its character. Zak reminds us of how things used to be.

Defender of the Crown

The golden age of CinemaWare gave us such classics as The Three Stooges, Rocket Ranger and this, Defender of the Crown. Recently given a modern day makeover for the PS2, the original was a stunning strategic title. Taking on the role of a figure of power, it was your job to gain total control of Britain by slowly seizing control of the provinces. This boiled down to storming castles, holding jousting competitions, managing your taxes and raising mighty armies. The graphics were nothing short of stunning and the game was hard to master. CinemaWare should have left it alone though, instead of defiling a legend with crappy remakes.

Dungeon Master

OK, so it may not have been the first game to feature a first-person view, but Dungeon Master was one of the most popular. In the game you controlled a four man team of gallant adventurers, who had to enter a deep and dangerous dungeon inhabited by all sorts of deadly creatures, with the aim of killing the Dungeon Master. On the way you could find better weapons, armour and other supplies, all the time descending deeper into the darkness. Riddles, puzzles and object management was the order of the day, as was character evolution and advancement. It may not be the greatest looking title ever, but the gameplay still holds true today.

Megalomania

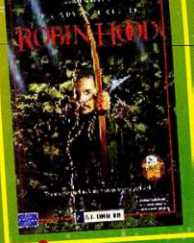
A lot of RTS type games started to appear on the home formats after a while, and most were simple clones of previous successes (no change there then). In the midst of all this came Megalomania. Instead of taking a serious standpoint, the game placed you in control of a range of wacky generals. The playing areas were small, and the action was fast and frantic at times. Starting off with simple subjects and low-tech creations, you had to research and develop weapons and other items before the enemy, so you could gain an advantage over your foes. Games didn't last hours, like so many of its rivals. This meant that more people gave the game a go, and it wasn't only for the RTS hardcore. Great stuff.

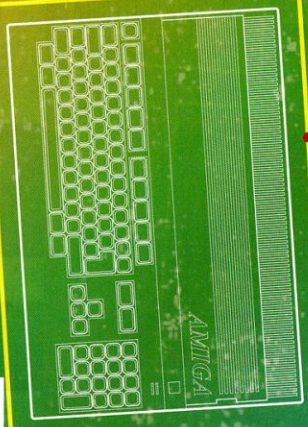
Kult

Another game that was ahead of its time was Kult. Like B.A.T, Kult was a sort of graphic novel adventure, only this time it was much, much stranger. You were cast as a special operative who had some powerful abilities. You had been placed into a ceremonial series of games and had to solve all sorts of devious and clever puzzles. The visuals were excellent and the locations simply oozed atmosphere. In fact, everything about that game was dripping with quality. The locations, characters and events were designed in an ultra-cool comic book style, and the actual gameplay was spot on. Also known as the Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess (!), this game just had to be played. Extreme violence!

TOP 10 AMIGA GAMES

The Amiga 500 was a versatile computer that just happened to be home to loads of great games. Anthony Buckley ploughs through the Amiga's back catalogue





Robin Hood

Along the way you had to bring together the Merry Men, rob from the rich give to the poor, and fall in love with Maid Marian. Most of the key points of the myth were involved; you could fight Little John, befriend the Friar, rescue Will Scarlet, and shoot people with lightning (ahem). The game was viewed from an isometric perspective (similar to the Populus games), whilst play was controlled by mouse. Graphically the game was not the prettiest pony in the park, although its small sprites were instantly recognisable as the central characters. Robin Hood was a fun game and surprisingly non-linear. After a few minutes play you could be heading for the gallows following a spot of deer hunting or could change the plot forever by simply killing one of the main protagonists such as Little John or Maid Marian.

North and South

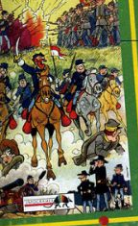
Loosely set around the American Civil war, this strategy game was best with two players. Choose a side (shockingly, north or south) and take turns to move your regiments and claim states. Acquire railways to bring in more troops, then build up your arms before launching a monumental battle for control of the country. The battles had each player set opposite each other across a field, or in some cases, a canyon. Casting aside any turn-based monotony, the fight was conducted in real time. It was not just simply button-bashing mayhem, as there were bridges to destroy and strategy to be implemented, and even if you won, the regiment could be depleted and easy pickings in the next conflict. Providing you had a friend to play with, North and South was a classic.

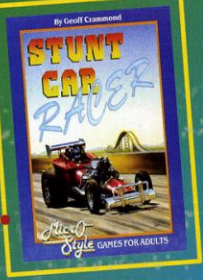
Stunt Car Racer

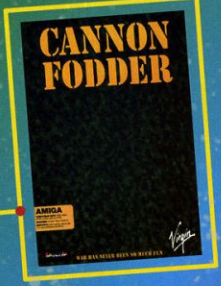
All of the tracks featured in Geoff Crammond's hit were more at home in a theme park than in a race game, yet this ambitious 3D race game pulled it off with aplomb. Race increasingly harder opponents across four divisions and aim for the top. This was easier said than done, particularly when the aforementioned tracks had names such as the Ski Jump, Stepping Stones and the Hump Back Bridge! The tracks really gave the impression of height, and there was some skill involved in trying to negotiate them without falling off. Stunt Car Racer was a unique game and serves as a standout in an otherwise stale genre.

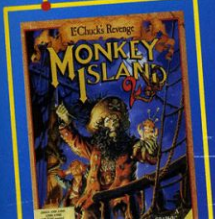
Alien Breed

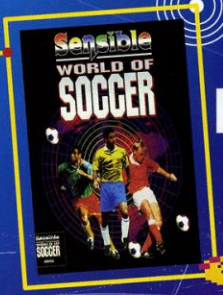
This top down shooter was set onboard a space station infested by aliens (small "a"). Using one or two players, the aim was to make your way through 12 intense levels. Each area involved a certain task – turn on power to open door etc – but the crux of the gameplay involved blasting the creatures in all their various guises, whilst trying to maintain a healthy level of ammo. Despite the lack of a license, it perfectly captured the spirit of the Aliens movie, and proved to be a challenging and fun shoot-em-up.











Cannon Fodder

Pick a bunch of soldiers and lead them on a series of missions. Survive a conflict and your troops headed up the army ranks. Lose one and a small white cross on a hill marked their passing. Control of your soldiers was intuitive, with the mouse utilised for all movement, weapon selection and shooting. Strategy played a key role in this game and it was essential to think ahead. You could opt to split up your troops to cover others rather than just send them in, all guns blazing. Which, despite the appeal, resulted in more little white crosses. Though the game's theme song, "War Has Never Been So Much Fun", may not grace many remembrance day parades, it certainly epitomised this strategy/arcade shooter.

IK+

International Karate Plus was yet another example of innovation in an otherwise done to death genre. Amazingly, for a fighting game, IK+ actually used a real fighting style and that was it. There were no special moves and victories were based on skill, not mere button bashing. What set it apart was that instead of two pugilists, there were three fighters on screen. The idea was to see how many rounds you could progress through in search of the elusive black belt. The action was punctuated by various mini games; the standout being the one where you had a shield and had to bounce away large balls. IK+ was a great game and one that was fun for either one or two players.

Speedball 2

The Bitmap Brothers had several Amiga hits, yet this sports sequel was their greatest. Set around the fictional futuristic sport of Speedball, the aim of the game was to take your lowly Brutal Deluxe team to the top. The sport itself was fast, intense, violent and fun. You had to score points by any means necessary, whether that be in the goals or by using the various gadgets that surrounded the court. Though no actual blood was shed, Speedball 2 was a violent game and proof that you can make a good sports game even if you invent the sport yourself.

Lemmings

The idea was simple. Guide your little lemming friends from one side of the screen to the other, ignoring the bizarre implements of death that would permanently retire your green haired chums. The bottom of the screen featured a host of different lemming skills that could be used to get them to the exit. So you had lemming bridge builders, diggers and parachutists to name but a few. The game featured an excellent learning curve, being simple to get into but near impossible to finish. Lemmings was and still is a classic puzzle game.

Monkey Island 2

Or Disk Juggler Simulator, as it was often referred to. Despite its 12 disks, Monkey Island 2 was a legendary game. Designed by Lucasarts, the game followed the continuous adventures of wood-be-pirate Guybrush Threepwood in a point and click puzzle adventure. This time Guybrush had to discover the treasure of the Big Whoop while once again dealing with his nemesis, the ghost pirate Le Chuck. The puzzles were ingenious and funny (the spitting contest – a standout) and it featured some truly bizarre and hilarious cast members. With all the puzzles, travelling and interaction, as well as huge game environment, Monkey Island 2 had a healthy lifespan. It was truly a pleasure to complete.

Sensible World of Soccer

On first impressions, the Sensible Soccer games didn't look all that clever, what with tiny footballers kicking around a small ball. But then aesthetics were not Sensible Soccer's strongpoint. No, Sensible Soccer was simply the most playable football game ever. It was easy to get into and near impossible to leave. Sensible World of Soccer was the first in the series to incorporate football management and featured hundreds of teams, players and leagues from all four corners of the globe. The Sensible Soccer games were without doubt the finest football games ever made. And that's all there is to it.

TOP 10 ARCADE GAMES

If you herded a thousand gamers into a pen and left them there for a week, they'd still never come up with an agreed top ten. But someone had to do it, and we reckon arcade expert Tom Sargent is the man for the job

Defender

You're the last hope against an alien invasion. Okay, that's enough about the plot. Defender never pretended to be anything other than a balls-to-the-wall sideways scrolling action of the very highest pedigree. It was as hard as hell to master – surging as you did along a horizontal plane preventing your humanoid chums from hybrid hell and morphing into deadly, swarming mutants. But once you nailed the tricky controls and techniques needed to survive (hyperspace anybody?), it simply obliterated the opposition in terms of pure, space-based rootin' tootin' shootin'. A ridiculously addictive shooter featuring pulsating sonics and near-perfect gameplay.

Street FighterII

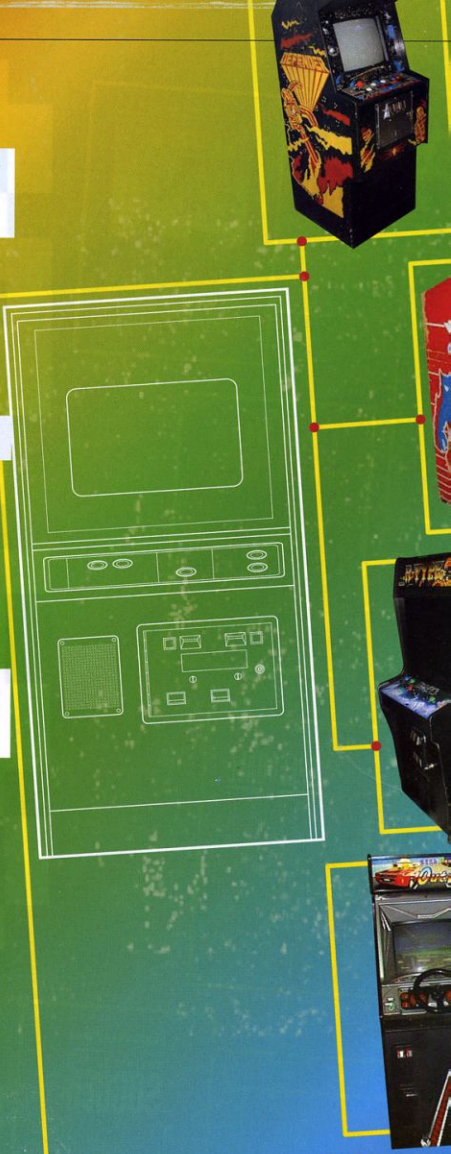
The only game from the 90's to make it into the top ten, Street Fighter II (and it's multifarious tweaked versions and sequels) captured the spirit (in a headlock, no doubt) of a nation beginning to tire of classic classics such as shoot-em-ups. This was a beat-em-up for the new generation – both graphically and conceptually. Never before had players had the opportunity to unleash such spine-splitting combos and choreographed moves. And correct me if I'm wrong, Street Fighter II was the first series of games where characters faced each other panting heavily before battle. Every beat-em-up does that now...

Pac-man

This is surely the greatest arcade game in history. It's the Pac-Daddy. The big Kahoona. The One game to rule them all. Love or loath the diminutive pill gobbler, you can't deny the staying power of Pac-Man. Put simply, it's the best selling, most commercially successful and recognised videogame brand in existence. Mario, quiet at the back! Many argue that Miss Pac-Man is a superior game. Yeah, yeah, whateverrrr... For me, the craze in the maze began with the original idea, even though it spawned seven official sequels.

Space Invaders

No top ten is complete without a nod to the defining moment that birthed arcade. Yes, I'm fully aware it wasn't the first, but those who were there will remind you that no game invoked so much post-school fervour as partaking in the systematic destruction of successive columns of increasingly frenzied Insectoid Invaders. The manner in which successive waves of regimented aliens progressed unerringly towards your defensive bases, as you attempted to pick them off, remains freakishly addictive to this day. Little wonder it hypnotised an entire nation of kids, who doubtless felt prepared for a real alien invasion.



Robotron 2084

More a trial of hand-to-eye coordination than anything else, Robotron took the arcades by storm primarily because of its unique controller system (You see, gimmicky ideas proved popular even in the 'good old days'). In a plot reminiscent of the film Terminator, you filled the mutant boots of a grunt commissioned to save the remnants of humanity from the slow march (from every angle) of invading mechanical Robotrons. What this boiled down to was mastering the two said gimmicky joysticks – one to move around the screen and the other to spit out laser beams at the alien upstarts. It was through this independent use of two joysticks, combined with an overhead view of the action, that a legend was born.

R-Type

R-Type added elements of previously unheard of strategy to what had become a fairly stagnant genre – not in terms of graphical bells and whistles, but the *way* shooters were played. R-Type and a succession of excellent sequels ensured that this popular genre would never be the same again, by allowing players to fire off or strategically position to the front or rear of the ship, a range of power orbs and special detachable weapons. Add to this a range of delightfully disgusting organic landscapes populated by some of the biggest, bile-spewing bosses ever to grace the screen, and it's easy to see why it proved so popular.

Gauntlet

When Atari's multiplayer fantasy fight fest emerged in the arcades during 1985, it became an overnight sensation. For the first time ever, (up to) four players could club together and cut a collective swath of destruction – as Warrior, Valkyrie, Wizard and Elf – rooms rammed to the rafters with ghosts, demons, sorcerers and even Death himself. Each character possessed all the usual strengths and weaknesses, so teamwork, along with a plentiful supply of 10 pence pieces and an ability to rush for energy-enhancing food before anyone else, was the order of the day if each of the 100 grunt-filled mazes were to be defeated. Just as playable today as the day they unwrapped the original machines.

Outrun

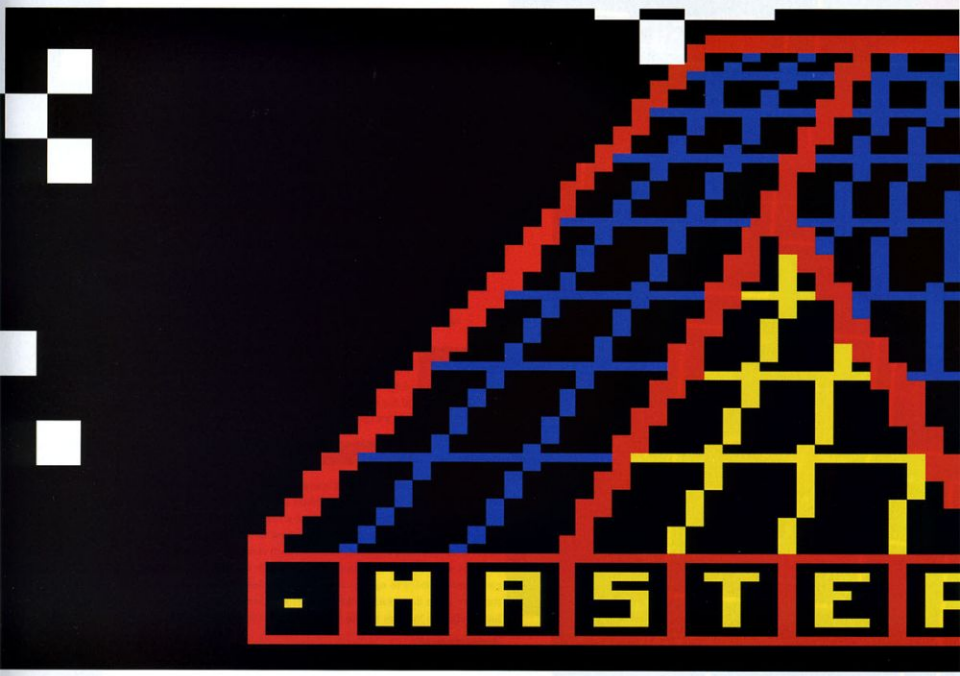
Probably the only racing game to almost convince the player he or she could actually smell the ocean spray, whilst negotiating what was definitely a new feature of racing games at the time – undulating roads and scenery. Quite simply, Outrun left rival racers in the dust because of its near-perfect handling, killer tunes and dreamy graphics. SEGA followed up this classic with two more notable classics, Space Harrier and Afterburner, but they couldn't quite match the roadside majesty, and sheer peddle-to-the metal playability of this strangely addictive cross-county racer.

Donkey Kong

Where Space Invaders invited gamers to murder thousands of alien aggressors, Donkey Kong milked our gaming glands in a whole new way. First, it introduced us to Nintendo and a diminutive, moustached plumber called Mario – you may have heard of him. Second, the world soon discovered that leaping over platforms and hitting things with a hammer was actually quite fun. Everybody's got his or her favourite Donkey Kong level, but each of the four seemingly simplistic designs proved fiendishly difficult to master yet fun to play. It's testament to Nintendo that the platform genre remains one of the strongest lures for gamers to this very day.

Galaga

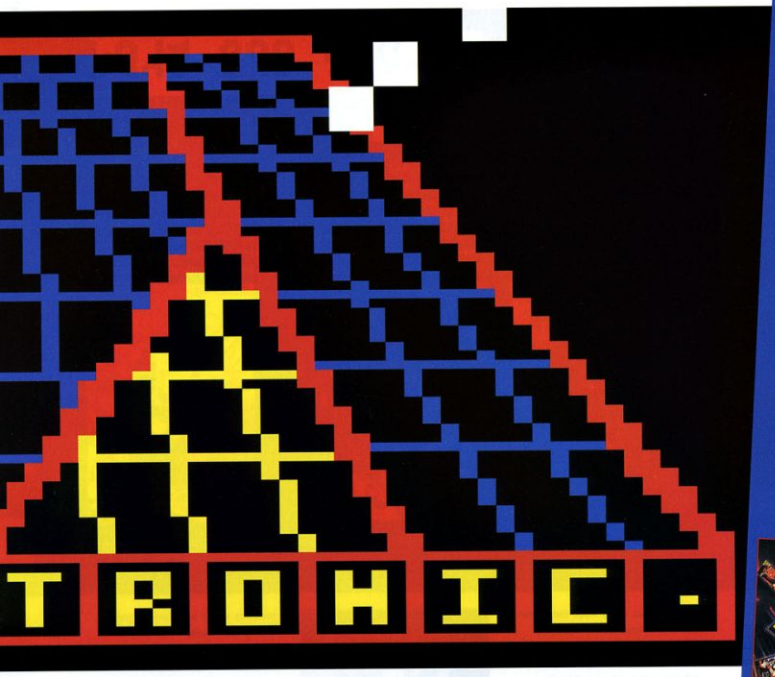
Another classic from the golden age of shoot-em-ups, Galaga took the premise of its predecessor Galaxians. It injected frantic, rapid fire shooting into the mix and topped it off by allowing the player to double his firepower by allowing your current ship to be captured. You weren't sure if this was a good idea the first time of trying, but by shooting the alien that had stolen your first ship, you could double up your firepower. Simple and yet unbelievably rewarding for those daring enough to risk losing a ship accidentally. Why was it so good? Who cares! A fantastically addictive and compelling arcade classic.



>mastertronic, a history.

It was announced in August last year that Mastertronic would be reborn as a software re-publisher. As its new owners look forward, we take the opportunity to look back at this classic software label. Anthony Guter, employee at the company from 1985 to 1991, takes us back to the beginning, revealing how Mastertronic ripped up the rulebook and redefined the UK software market

Mastertronic was founded in 1983 by Martin Alper, Frank Herman and Alan Sharam. Based in London, the three businessmen had some financial backing from a small, outside group of investors. Unlike many of the company's competitors in the games software market, the company was not set up by programmers seeking an outlet for their creations. Nor was it part of an established business with money to spare, dipping its corporate toe in the games industry's rising tide. Mastertronic's founders committed themselves to succeeding as publishers by selling games as cheaply as possible. Other publishers seemed to be concerned only with the process of creating the software and marketing an image – a strategy aimed directly at the consumer, with the hope that customer demand would somehow bring the games into the shops. In contrast, Mastertronic aimed its strategy at the distributors and retailers. If the games could be put on the shelves then a low



selling price would do the rest.

To this end, the core of the strategy was budget software – games priced at no more than £3, at a time when most decent software was priced at £6 or more. In fact, Mastertronic opted for £1.99 as the basic price. Both Alper and Herman had experience in the video distribution business, and they believed it possible to build up a reasonable market share at this low price. With the strategy in place, the company began trading on April 1st, 1984. It initially operated out of the back room of Sharam's office, in the heart of London's West End.

Trading blows

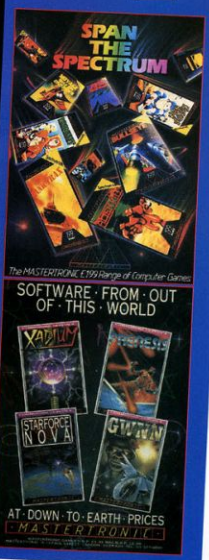
After the infamous videogame crash of 1983, a new generation of cheap, programmable computers emerged. This was led in the UK by Sinclair, with fierce competition from Commodore. At this time, the retail end was poorly organised, with console games being sold through a variety of outlets including electrical stores, photography shops and some of the high street chains. When the console market collapsed, these retailers pulled out. And as there were virtually no specialist games shops, publishers were forced to take out adverts in computer magazines and sell their software by mail order. The problem was one of classification. Were games merely toys, or published products like books and records, or did they rightly belong with consumer electronics alongside the computers on which they ran? There was no obvious answer.

One certainty was that the trade was in disarray. The failure of the first consoles made retailers suspicious. The buyers for the larger high street chains like Woolworths and Boots were confused by the many different types of home computer. They did not know how to cope with suppliers who might produce a good game one month, then nothing but failures thereafter. They were afraid to commit to buying product unless they could be sure of returning unsold stock for a refund, but who knew how long the new games publishers would be in business?

And how the hell do you sell a computer game anyway? A customer could flick through a book, listen to a record, play with a toy. Games were slow to load and needed some understanding which sales staff usually lacked. It seemed crazy to stick a tape into a computer, wait five minutes for it to load and then watch the potential customer play with it for ten minutes before deciding not to buy. Retailers were unsurprisingly sceptical and reluctant to believe there was any money to be made.

Distribution deals

Mastertronic was started by men who understood distribution and marketing. They knew nothing about computer games and were proud to boast that they never played them. When programmers came in with demos, someone would have to set up the machines, load the games and even plug in the joysticks for the directors.


SPAN THE SPECTRUM
The MASTERTRONIC £1.99 Range of Computer Games
SOFTWARE · FROM · OUT OF · THIS · WORLD
AT · DOWN · TO · EARTH · PRICES
MASTERTRONIC

Mastertronic rarely advertised in the specialist press, but there were exceptions

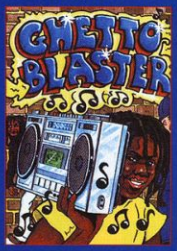
>masterwhat?

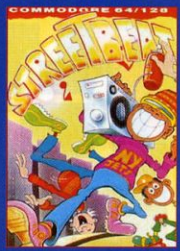
Why was it called Mastertronic? As part of a general marketing plan, the word 'master' was to be used with a variety of other words in order to distribute various electrical products. The company briefly published music under the name Mastersound and videos as Mastervision. These were not particularly succesful ventures. It also used the name MasterAdventurer for marketing interactive fiction. This was partly due to a deal with Carnell Software to publish an elaborate adventure game for the Spectrum called Wrath of Magra. Carnell Software fell into financial difficulties and ceased trading in the summer of 1984, although Mastertronic republished two of their earlier releases, Volcanic Dungeon and Black Crystal.

Mastertronic's re-release carries the familiar colour-coded packaging design

>where are they now?

Mastertronic agreed publishing deals with many programmers, yet records show that some of them never returned to collect their royalties! Those who vanished without trace include Nigel Johnstone (The Captive, Spooks), M&S Srebalius (Rockman, Rest in Peace), Paul Ranson (converted Bump Set Spike to Amstrad and Spectrum) and Raymond Tredoux (Star Force Nova). One cheeky chap who probably had good reason not to return with cap in hand was Sean DeBray, who sold the same game as Ghettoblaster to Virgin, and as Streetbeat to Mastertronic!





The same game, but with a different title and a different publisher

directors. They never employed programmers directly. Everything was bought in from outside, either directly from the authors or from other games publishers. Once established, Mastertronic was deluged with games from enthusiastic amateurs and actually published quite a few of them.

Before the company started trading, the business strategy had been clearly defined. Each of the separate elements (distribution, sourcing and pricing) were vital to success.

The founders fell back on their backgrounds in video retail and used their contacts to set up distribution deals. In the beginning, the high street chains were not interested. But because the games were cheap, it was easy to persuade smaller retailers to take them. Mastertronic set up a network of self-employed distributors, with some knowledge of merchandising, to reach outlets that the mainstream wholesalers overlooked. A key figure in setting up these networks was Richard Bielby, an ex-professional cricketer with Leicestershire. Bielby and his wife kept in touch with dozens of shops and traders, bought in bulk from Mastertronic and broke the stock into manageable units for their sub-distributors and merchandisers. Many had experience of the video distribution business, which was now rapidly consolidating as large high street operators took over. Computer games software was a welcome alternative.

They targeted newsagents, sweetshops, garages, video shops, groceries and even motorway service stations. Shops were encouraged to take 'dealer packs' – 100 games at a time mounted on cardboard racks. They were asked only to give the products some floor space. Sale or exchange agreements meant they undertook no risk.

Rallying the retailers

The nervousness of the retail trade about the continuity of software products was profound. Buyers did not want to rely on publishers who might not deliver new product on time. They wanted the same sort of assurances that the long established music and book publishers could supply, with guaranteed releases of new titles and buyback arrangements for overstocks. Mastertronic set out to provide these assurances. While other publishers based their marketing strategy on the output of one or two key programmers,

From left to right, Martin Alper, John Maxwell, PR person Alison Beasley and Alan Sharam

Mastertronic cast its net wide and looked to release a constant flow of new titles.

Unlike its competitors, Mastertronic did not entrust the storage and distribution of its products to wholesalers. Determined to control the distribution process, the directors set up their own warehouse. In the early days this was a cellar in Paul Street, on the edge of the City of London. Most of the employees were casual labourers. To take on the overheads of a warehouse was a bold step, and one which very few publishers would ever do. But for Mastertronic, the key was to keep promises about delivery. No publisher working through a wholesaler could guarantee when products would be issued. A retailer buying from Mastertronic could, if they wished, go to the warehouse and collect the goods there and then.

Running the warehouse kept the directors in touch with the physical side of the business too. By listening to retailers, they were forced to understand how to pack games, what sorts of packaging broke in transit, what sort of labelling was required, and just about every aspect of distribution. Furthermore, the three key suppliers – the tape copier, the arthouse and the printers – were all geared to fast responses. They understood that it was often crucial to get a certain number of titles out each month.

Mastertronic also pioneered colour coded packaging. All games had a coloured triangle on the top right hand corner of the inlay and a coloured rectangle on the spine. Spectrum games were yellow, Commodore 64 games were red and Amstrad games were orange. This led many software houses to use variations on this theme. Retailers, who understood very little about computer games, liked this system and it enhanced the professional image of the company.

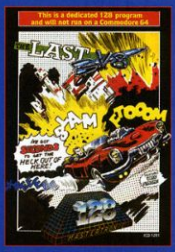
>One man and his droid II

Lurking just outside the top 10 best selling Mastertronic games is One Man & His Droid, the world's first alien sheep-herding simulator. Clive Brooker, its programmer, wrote a 128K-only sequel in 1991 and approached Virgin Mastertronic. The company told him that the Spectrum market was all but dead, but if the game was good enough, they'd convert it to other formats. In the end the game was never published, but Clive has made it freely available for download from his site (www.autolaunch.freeserve.co.uk).

The unpublished sequel, now available as a free download

>Formats of the future

Mastertronic was one of the few publishers to sell dedicated software for the more powerful Spectrum and Commodore 128 machines. The Enhanced versions of The Last V8 and Kikstart on the C128, only sold around 5,000 copies – very poor compared to the standard machines. It was a similar story on the Spectrum where the 128K versions of the Magic Knight sequels suffered badly against their 48K counterparts. In fact, the 128K version of Knight Tyme was released a couple of months before the 48K version, yet still only shifted 7,400 copies.



Poor sales forced Mastertronic to can its dedicated 128K games

Sourcing software

Because Mastertronic was a publisher and not a software house, its first problem was to source the product. One important source was Mr Chip (later Magnetic Fields), a software house run by Doug Braisby. The games he sourced in the first 15 months of Mastertronic's life (up to June 1985) sold a staggering 395,000 copies. But this achievement was eclipsed by another key source, the Darling Brothers. Having mastered the art of quickly developing games for the Vic20 and C64, David and Richard Darling set up a partnership with Mastertronic which gave them both a royalty payment and a share of the profits on the sales of their games. It was astonishingly successful. In that first 15 months, nearly 750,000 games written by the Darlings were sold, netting them some £85,000! For two boys of school age, this was evidence enough that games would earn them more than any nine to five, and they soon terminated the deal with Mastertronic and established Codemasters, their own budget software company.

To put these two sources in perspective, about 2.1 million units were sold of all titles in that first 15 months. Thus the deals with Braisby and the Darlings secured 55% of early Mastertronic sales. Later on, as Mastertronic became better known, many people approached the company with finished games, or just ideas, and were keen for Mastertronic to publish their work.

Early hits

The early games were produced for the dominant computer formats of the time. The Vic20, C64 and Spectrum were the main machines. The marketing strategy required a flow of titles so that retailers had compelling reasons to keep the games prominent in their shops, and attracted and held the interest of the consumer.

Between April and June 1984, Mastertronic launched 32 titles: 13 on the C64, nine on the Spectrum, seven on the Vic20, two on the BBC Micro and one on the Dragon. Eight titles were developed by Mr Chip, seven by the Darlings and four by CME Software. Almost all were derivative, based on popular arcade games. Hence there was a Centipede clone called Spectipede on the Spectrum and BBC Micro, and a Pac-Man rip-off named Munch Mania on the C64. But a couple of titles stood out – the Darlings' BMX Racers on the C64, and Vegas Jackpot by Mr Chip on the C64 and Vic20. BMX Racers was not based on an arcade game and it was the first of a number of extremely successful games aimed specifically at young boys. 340,000 copies of BMX Racers were sold. Vegas Jackpot sold nearly 300,000 units, including a rare version for the Dragon.

Great care was paid to the appearance of the games and to the image of the publisher. Quality artwork was commissioned for the inlay covers. Some of these pictures, particularly those with science fiction themes, undoubtedly helped many an undistinguished game to sell.

Pricing

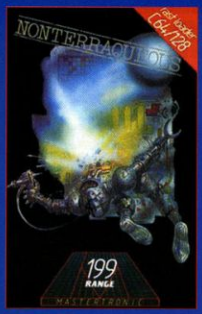
In 1983/4, most computer games retailed in the UK at prices between £5 and £8. Retailers disliked cheaper games because they made less profit and the public were suspicious of the quality of budget games (rightly so in the majority of cases). Despite this, Mastertronic games were priced at a mere £1.99.

At the time, all computer games in the UK and Europe were distributed on cassette tape. Computers using floppy disks were available, most notably the C64 and the models aimed at business users, such as the Apple, Commodore PET and Tandy ranges. But these were mainly sold in the US. In Europe, the cheaper tape-based machines were much more common. Games were short, reflecting the limited memory capacities of the computers. Code that filled the memory would fit onto a short length of tape that could load in around four or five minutes. For a reasonable print run, a tape duplicator could produce copies for about 25p each. Mastertronic, aiming for large product runs, bought its tapes at 22p (some assistance was gained in the directors having part ownership of the tape duplicator). Inlay cards cost around 3p each, with the cover artwork costing anything up to £1,000; assuming a print run of 20,000, this worked out at around 5p per unit. Other distribution costs might add another 5p in total. So a game could be duplicated and put out to market for a total cost of 35p.

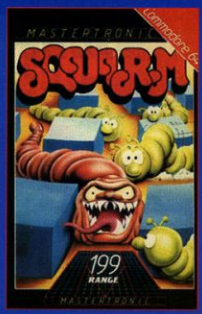
The other main cost was the software itself. Games could be purchased outright but most authors wanted royalties, so as not to lose out

>Mastertronic's all-time best sellers.

The top 30 sales across all formats, including all Mastertronic labels.

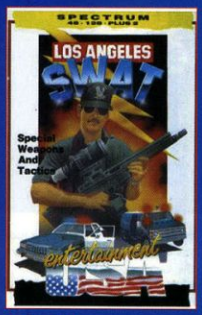


30 NONTERRAQUEOUS
121,533

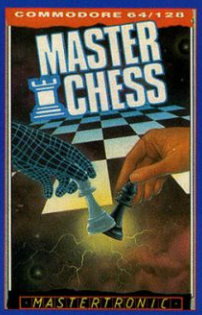


29 SQUIRM
123,006

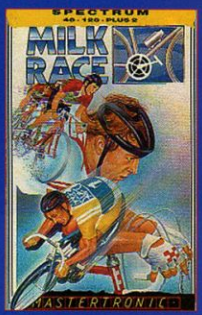
24 SPELLBOUND
152,378



23 LA SWAT
161,672



22 MASTERCHESS
167,601



21 MILK RACE
174,110

in case of success. The standard deal that was offered in 1984 was an advance of £2,000 and a royalty rate of 10p per unit. Many young authors were very happy to take this, especially when Mastertronic usually went on to sell 50,000 copies or more.

Profitability

Having set the costs, the profit depended on the wholesale price. Here, the calculations work backwards. From a retail price of £1.99, VAT (15% at the time) took 26p. Retailers expected to make a margin of 30%. They would, therefore, not buy at prices higher than about £1.30. Between this price and the production cost of 35p was a margin wide enough to cover advertising, overheads, the profits of distributors and, provided there were not too many, the costs of failed titles.

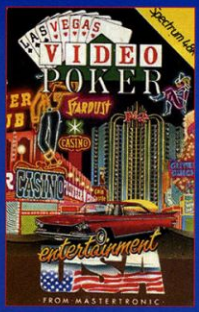
In practice Mastertronic sold to distributors at about 90p per unit, reduced to around 80p in the more competitive late 1980s, and at about £1.30 when they were able to distribute directly to retailers. This pricing structure would generate good profits provided sales were high enough. If the total sales of a title were just 10,000 units, then raw material and distribution costs might be £3,000, inlay artwork and advance to the author a further £2,500, and the receipts about £9,000. So this would bring a reasonable gross margin of 38%. But in the early days, the company easily exceeded 10,000 units per title. The ten C64 titles released in Mastertronic's early days sold (on average) 40,000 in the first year, then over 50,000 before being withdrawn from sale. The Vic20 titles achieved 44,000 on average. Surprisingly, the early Spectrum releases did less well, but still averaged 28,000. Budget pricing proved to be perfectly viable provided that the majority of titles achieved good sales, and in the fast growing market of the mid 80s, at the pocket-money price of £1.99, they did just that.

Growing pains

Rapid growth required more staff and the development of internal systems for accounting, sales, stock control and royalties. The company left George Street for a flat overlooking Regent's Park. By now there was a games buyer, John Maxwell (with two assistants) and some PR, accounting and secretarial staff.

The flat soon proved too small for the expanding business, so in September 1985, Mastertronic found new offices in Paul Street (where the warehouse was situated). This became the company's home until it merged with Virgin Games in September 1988.

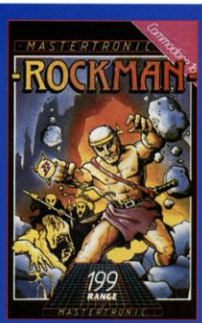
But long before then, the emergence of new computers slowly began to complicate the business. The company now had to consider whether it was worth making conversions of existing hits for different machines and models. The more types of computer, the less shelf space available for each individual format. In a way, this reduced the range of different games. The Amstrad CPC, Atari XL, MSX and Commodore 16 computers all became established in this year. Few of the competitors took much notice of the C16, and for a while, Mastertronic was the only company with a range of games for this machine. Each title sold in huge quantities. For example, Squirm on the C64 sold 41,000 copies, but one year later, the C16 version sold 82,000.



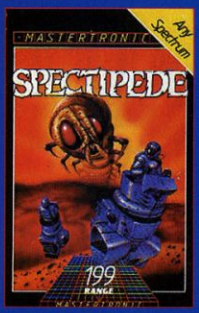
28 VIDEO POKER
127,174

27 THE LAST V8
127,331

26 BIG MAC
139,946



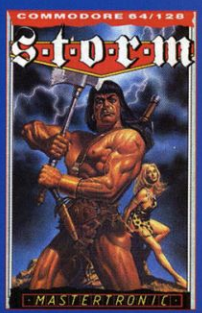
25 ROCKMAN
143,882



20 SPECTIPEDE
178,115

19 WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST
182,407

18 FEUD
191,381



17 STORM
193,074

MAD for it

In late 1985, the company launched the MAD label. This stood for Mastertronic Added Dimension, and was the first, deliberate, step away from the pure budget market. MAD games retailed at £2.99 and were intended to be of better quality than their cheaper counterparts. The label was launched with a boat party on the Thames, where the authors demonstrated the first games in the range – The Last V8, Master Of Magic, Hero Of The Golden Talisman and Spellbound, sequel to the very popular Finders Keepers. The MAD launch was an exception to the company's policy of not spending a lot on marketing. Its competitors spent plenty on advertising, mainly in magazines. Mastertronic rarely advertised. This probably reduced the amount of editorial coverage it received, but overall the game reviews were fair. The press had been fairly contemptuous of the publisher at first, but in 1985 there was a grudging acceptance that budget games were at least value for money, with some as good as full price products.

In 1986 Mastertronic became cool. It began to be deluged with games, game ideas and propositions. Sample tapes arrived daily and were stacked up for evaluation. People would walk in off the street and if they had something promising, they'd be signed up there and then. The TV show Jim'll Fix It received a letter from a youngster, asking if his idea could to be turned into a game, and Uncle Jim duly obliged (with a little help from Mastertronic and Icon Design). The game was called Supertrolley and featured a cartoon Jimmy Saville on the cover.

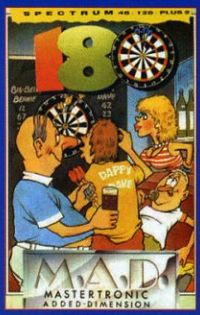
Programmers visited the company regularly, including David Jones (Magic Knight series), Clive Brooker (Empire Fights Back, One Man & His Droid, Lap of the Gods), Kevin Green (Skyjet, Flash Gordon, Space Hunter), Jim Ferrari (King Tut, Human Race, Hollywood or Bust). Now and then Rob Hubbard would pop in and hand over his latest tune. Jeff Minter, the shaggy-haired one himself, also visited. Several programmers worked for the company for a while as technical advisors. These included Stephen Curtis (Nonterraqueous, Soul of a Robot, Into Oblivion), Richard Aplin (Destructo, Fly Spy, Ultimate Combat Mission) and Tony Takoushi (Frenesis, Hyperforce).

Tomorrow the world!

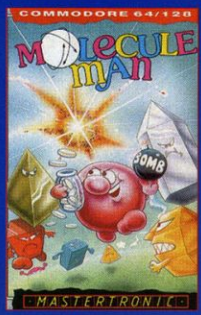
From the beginning, Mastertronic software had been sold in the USA by a local distributor. In 1986, Alper went to California to set up Mastertronic Inc. Primarily, this company could only distribute C64 games because all the other 8-bit computers were virtually unknown in the US. Gradually, Alper introduced games for the new 16-bit machines and Mastertronic Inc began to take on a different profile to the UK-based business. Links with US software houses provided a new source of games and the label Entertainment USA was created to showcase these in Europe. This was balanced by another label named Bulldog ('Best of British').

The growing business also found exclusive distributors in the major European markets and thus created the impression of a truly international group. The UK company was now managed by Herman, whilst Sharam increasingly specialised in sales and logistics. Around the late summer of 1986, Mastertronic

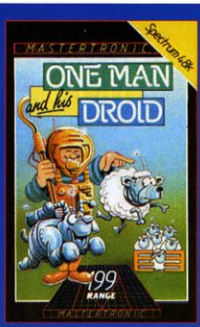
16 NINJA
194,897



15 180
196,155

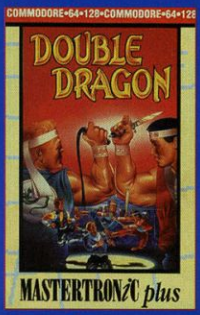


14 MOLECULE MAN
210,693

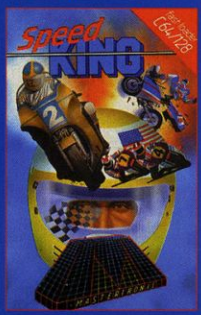


13 ONE MAN & HIS DROID
212,722

08 KIKSTART
286,256



07 DOUBLE DRAGON
289,510



06 SPEED KING
304,499

05 VEGAS JACKPOT
306,957

recruited Geoff Heath as Director of Marketing. Geoff had run both Activision and latterly Melbourne House. He was something of a heavyweight in the games industry, and his long-term target was to publish full price software under the Mastertronic name.

16-bit computers became increasingly popular, and for the first time, the quality of games for home machines such as the Amiga and the Atari ST seemed similar to those found in arcades. The 16-bit range was launched, appropriately enough, on a new label called 16-Blitz, although the name was not used for very long. Mastertronic Inc began to develop a range of new arcade games that would run equally well on home computers. It agreed to buy a large number of Amiga chips from Commodore to power the new arcade machines. This venture, called Arcadia, nearly killed the company because the project developed slowly, with games of poor quality not well suited for arcades.

On the other side of the coin, the success of the budget range and the growing influence of the company led to it becoming the main supplier of both budget and full price software to a number of major retailers in the UK, notably Toys R' Us and Woolworths. Some full price publishers were happy to let Mastertronic re-release their older games at a budget price, and of course, this was very easy business. The Richochet label was born, featuring games from Activision, Martech and US Gold.

Mergers and buy-outs

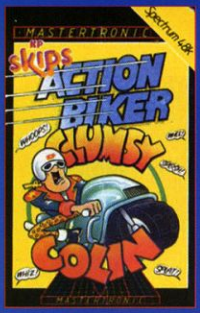
The business had always steered clear of full price software, but that changed radically in 1987 when it purchased struggling UK publisher Melbourne House from its Australian holding company, Beam Software. Melbourne House kept its label identity and a few of the staff joined the Mastertronic team, notably Rachel Davies the marketing manager, and general manager Martin Corrall. Ironically they were reunited with their old boss, Geoff Heath.

This move meant that Mastertronic had first refusal on re-releases of classic games such as the Hobbit, Lord of the Rings and Way Of The Exploding Fist. However, the main justification for the purchase was to provide a vehicle for the sale of full price games, and in particular as a sales outlet for the home versions of popular arcade games.

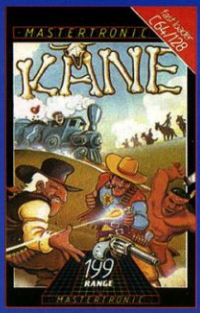
In 1987, following negotiations between Herman and Richard Branson, Virgin Group purchased the 45% of shares held by the outside investment group. In that year, Mastertronic's turnover was about £8 million, with pre-tax profits standing at £1 million. The deal valued the group at around £10 million. The remaining 55% was held by Alper, Herman and Sharam, who eventually sold out in 1988. The company was renamed the Mastertronic Group Ltd, and later merged with Virgin Games to create Virgin Mastertronic.

In September 1988, the staff left Paul Street and joined forces with the Virgin Games staff in offices just off Portobello Road. This signalled the beginning of the end to the key Mastertronic budget business.

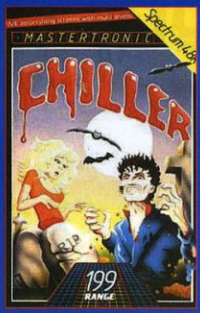
While the buy-out shifted the focus of the company, the budget end of the business had been in general decline since 1986, the year in which Mastertronic peaked. From then on, sales declined almost as fast as they



12 ACTION BIKER
251,515



11 KANE
262,829



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09 KIKSTART 2
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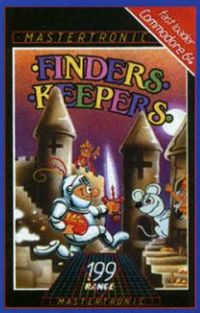

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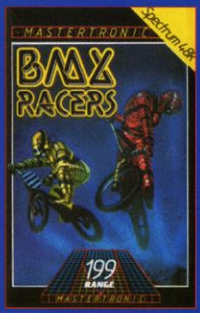

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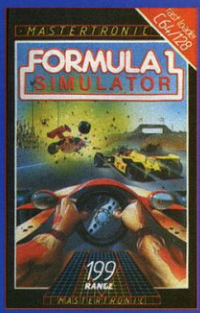


01 FORMULA 1 SIMULATOR
568,013

grew. The number of titles released actually increased in 1987/8, so the unit sales per title were falling rapidly, eroding the profitability of the business to the point that there seemed little use in continuing.

This decline had several reasons, the first being new and intense competition in the budget market. Codemasters has established itself as a very successful company, and full price publishers like US Gold began to release their own budget labels. The growing market for 16-bit computers was another contributory factor. Mastertronic produced budget games for these machines but there was never the same buoyancy in the market. The console market was bouncing back too, spearheaded by the NES and the Sega Master System. This was one pie that Mastertronic most definitely had its finger in.

The Japanese giant

It was Herman who, in early 1987, spotted that Sega had no UK distributor for its Master System range. Mastertronic applied and was appointed distributor for one year. Martin Corrall, who was somewhat at a loose end after the absorption of Melbourne House, was the ideal manager for this new line of business. The company sold all it could get its hands on that year, and the UK distributorship was renewed. In addition, Mastertronic were appointed as distributors in France and Germany, and thus was born the huge business that was to become Sega Europe.

In 1991, the group turnover was almost £100 million. Nearly all of the sales, and certainly all of the profit, came from Sega products. Full price games such as Golden Axe and Supremacy were achieving significant sales, making the budget business irrelevant.

In early 1991, Sega expressed an interest in taking over the distribution business (but not the publishing side). Virgin Group sold, and as a result, the staff moved over to Sega. Only a handful of Virgin programmers stayed with the publishing side (quickly renamed Virgin Interactive Entertainment, or VIE).

After the Sega takeover, Herman became deputy Managing Director of Sega Europe and Sharam was appointed Managing Director of Sega UK. Alper stayed with Virgin and continued to head up VIE for several years. Around 1993, VIE pulled out of the budget games market altogether.

Looking back

The Mastertronic name may have died over 10 years ago, but it continues to bring back memories. There's surely thousands of kids who could not afford the more expensive games and who were able to enjoy gaming thanks to Mastertronic. The business really was unique – it could not be replicated today. Games are now developed by teams, with typical retail prices being between £30 and £40. Gone are the days when a teenager could walk unannounced into a publisher's office, load up their game and instantly be offered a publishing deal. But there really was a time when this happened. It is beginning to feel like a legendary era, but it was only twenty years ago.

For further insight into Mastertronic, visit Anthony's website at: **www.guter.org** RG*

>street fighting clan

It's 15 years since Street Fighter first arrived on home consoles. To celebrate this anniversary, Capcom is to release Hyper Street Fighter II, the ultimate version of its seasoned brawler. Our resident fight fan, Charles Brigden, likes the odd scrap now and then, especially if it involves Hurricane Kicks and Dragon Punches.

Stand guard as he presents a timely history of this legendary series

>The new generation.

After a long, long, long wait, Capcom finally released a true sequel to Street Fighter II in 1997. Street Fighter III: New Generation received a lukewarm reception from fans, being viewed as a step down from the excellent Street Fighter Alpha series. Capcom did away with every character except Ken and Ryu, and introduced a whole new cast of bizarre fighters who really left a lot to be desired. Improved versions called Second Impact and Third Strike followed, addressing the character issue by bringing back Akuma and Chun-Li.

The main problem with Street Fighter III was its sheer depth. This game was simply too complex to be enjoyed in the arcades. The Dreamcast version fared better, because you could take a copy home and devote the time required to master the game.

>Pocket fighters.

Unsurprisingly, Street Fighter has also had its fair share of outings on handheld consoles, the first of which appeared in the form of Champion Edition on the portable version of the PC Engine. Hot on its heels was a version of The World Warrior on the original GameBoy. Better versions have appeared on Nintendo's handheld successor, the GameBoy Advance, with the mouthful that is Super Street Fighter II Turbo Revival, and the single best portable version of the game, Street Fighter Alpha 3 Advance.

Over the history of video and computer games, there have always been ground-breaking titles that have defined – or redefined – a genre and become instantly synonymous with that particular category. So much so, that when you think of that type of game, you immediately recall that one specific title. With platformers you immediately think of Super Mario Brothers, and with driving, you think of Grand Theft Auto: Vice City. With 2D one-on-one beat-em-ups though, there's only one game that smacks you in the face – Street Fighter II.

First strike

The legacy of Street Fighter II and its legions of modifications, sequels and prequels began in 1987, with Japanese publisher Capcom, who had previously been responsible for such classic arcade titles as 1942 and Ghouls 'n' Ghosts. Street Fighter arrived, and while it was not the game we have come to love so much, it had all the signs of things to come. For instance, there were only two selectable characters, Ryu and Ken. The final boss of the game was Sagat, who would wear the scar given to him by Ryu at the end of this game in later entries in the series.

Capcom employed a new gimmicky fighting system, with strange pads on the machine that you would hit to punch or kick. The harder you hit the pads, the more damage you did to your opponent. These pads inevitably broke, forcing Capcom to replace them with two separate sets of buttons for light, medium and hard attacks. The six button fight system was born, and the rest was history. While not hugely popular, and still forgotten amongst the mainstream public that would later eat up its sequels, Street Fighter had sown the seeds for Capcom, and its advance on the beat-em-up market would soon be coming up full force.

In 1990, they released Final Fight, a side-scrolling beat-em-up that would advance the work in Street Fighter further, with better animation and smoother moves. The game was a huge hit, and while its simple storyline and fighting were no match for Capcom's later beat-em-up successes, its characters, both good and bad, would later go on to appear in Street Fighter sequels. After the popularity of Final Fight, the stage was set for Capcom to unleash its newest title on the world.

World beater

Street Fighter II: The World Warrior was released into arcades in 1991 and immediately became a smash hit. Word spread through schools and playgrounds with the news of this incredible game. With eight fighters to choose from, hailing from all around the world, and the reinstated six-button control system, The World Warrior effectively created a new genre in which combos could be pulled off with ease, and amazing special moves could be achieved by a simple combination of buttons. However, while everybody ate it up, we all wanted more.

In return, Capcom decided to give it to us, over and over, and over again. After the release of the original Street Fighter II, there were more than five different updates to the game, with dozens more added to the series. Naturally, this was seen as overkill by

Ken was one of the only characters to appear in all three games

even the most ardent fan, and the later releases in the series were not met with a huge amount of commercial success or fanfare.

With Marvel vs Capcom 2, the last Street Fighter release in recent times, Capcom seems to have gone onto pastures new, with series' such as Resident Evil and Mega Man selling millions. So is this the end for Street Fighter? You'd think so, but Capcom aren't about to let it slip from memory just yet. But just what is it that has made Street Fighter II still a household name 12 years after its release, and that made the title a genre-defining game in the first place?

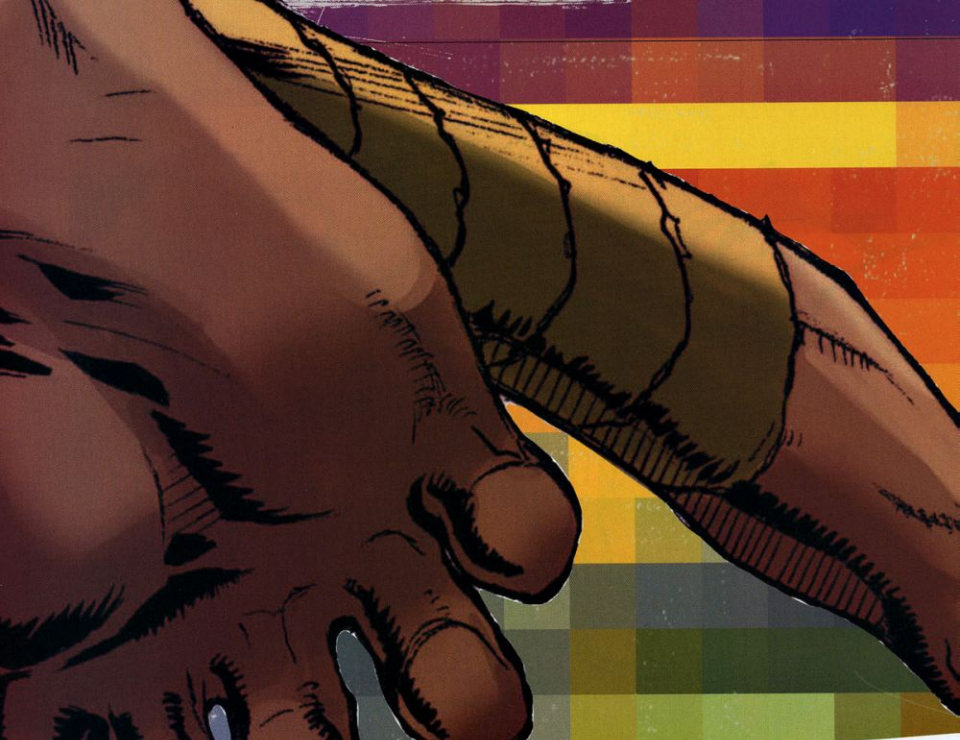
Birth of a legend

Video gaming wasn't particularly exciting at the beginning of the 1990s. We still had Mario and the usual Nintendo, sugar-coated suspects, and Sonic was about the most exciting thing around, but there was nothing out there that was ready to grab us by the throats and make us take notice. At least, not until Capcom unleashed Street Fighter II in 1991. Here was a game that was so deceptively simple that anyone could just pick it up and play, and also enjoy it. Each character has an abundance of special moves, and they could be learned in a very short time. The use of combo moves was actually an accident on the developer's part. They discovered there was a split-second gap between most of the moves – just enough time to sneak in another attack. This introduced an element of skill, elevating it above the button-bashing tactics required by just about every other fighting game at the time. While everyone else was putting out games that still had the basic structure of Double Dragon, Capcom was taking the genre by the scruff of its neck and shaking it up for all to see.

Street Fighter II also made a reasonable breakthrough in the treatment of its characters. At the time, most story-based beat-em-ups were the typical revenge dramas that basically set them up as game adaptations of Death Wish. SFII still had this angle, but split itself across eight different characters that, while being stereotypical, all had refreshingly different stories. Ryu was the essential warrior, searching not for glory or prizes but to satisfy his spirit, while Ken was the arrogant and egotistical one out to show everyone that he was the best. Dhalsim fought to transcend his spiritual plane, and Blanka fought because he didn't know any different, bless him. There were two characters, Guile and Chun Li, who did embrace the revenge motive, but neither of their scenarios were as straightforward or cheesy as something like a kidnapped girlfriend.

But where the game really made headway was the gameplay. Never before had a fighting game really had such an impact to a point where it was imperative for everybody to know every single move for every single character. Sure, people picked their favourite characters and ran with them, but it was still important to know moves for everyone, so if someone got to Ken or Ryu first you could easily play with Zangief or Guile. That was the whole dynamic of Street Fighter II. And it was all inherently linked to the incredible two-player mode.

The one-player mode of Street Fighter II was always excellent and it was one of



those games where one man against the machine always drew a crowd of people. But what was great in one-player was expanded exponentially in two-player, with the satisfaction of beating the machine itself not half as much as defeating the man standing next to you, destroying his pride and scarring his soul. Whether it was your best friend or some random kid you met in the arcade, nothing mattered except sending that person home licking their wounds and hanging their head in the wake of your bare-knuckle skills.

Attack of the clones

Never one to overlook a potential franchise, Capcom released a new version of Street Fighter II in 1992. Champion Edition wasn't that different to the original game, with Capcom keeping the tried-and-trusted formula but making some small alterations. On the visual side, each character had some brand new threads, but everyone also had their moves beefed up. Ken's Dragon Punch had a further range, Ryu's fireball was more powerful, and every character was stronger. However, the biggest addition was the chance to finally play as one of the four bosses, Balrog, Vega, Sagat, and the big baddie M. Bison. While the ending sequence for each boss was essentially the same – with the evil hordes taking over the world – the attraction of being able to finally use moves like the Tiger Uppercut and Bison's all-powerful Psycho Crusher was a big draw, and unsurprisingly, Champion Edition was a big hit.

The success of Champion Edition brought on a whole host of illegal pirate versions of the game, with faster speeds and some outrageous moves. Now every man and his fish could walk into a seedy arcade, funfair, or takeaway and experience a more intense, if illegal, Street Fighter experience. Now Ryu could shoot a volley of fireballs that covered the whole screen, any character could teleport, and you could switch between characters mid-game. The games had titles like Rainbow Edition and Blackbelt Edition, and while they looked cool, the lack of any kind of rules to these special moves rendered them unplayable.

As a result, Capcom went back to the drawing board, and beat the pirates at their own game by releasing Street Fighter II: Hyper Fighting. This version had similarly radical moves, but was much more stable. The main attraction of Hyper Fighting was its increased speed, but Capcom again gave all the characters new outfits and another increased level of power and strength. Now Ken was able to fly across the screen with his Dragon Punch, and he and Ryu could reach higher with their Hurricane Kicks. Blanka received a new cannonball attack and Dhalsim was blessed with the best move of all – the ability to teleport. Hyper Fighting was, expectedly, a huge success, but this wasn't the end for the series just yet. Capcom was only just getting started.

The new Hyper Street Fighter II game includes every fighter from the long-running series

In 1994, Capcom performed a total overhaul of Street Fighter II. They refined the look of the characters, gave the game much-improved graphics, and added four brand-new characters – Fei Long, Deejay, Cammy, and T.Hawk. This took the total number of playable characters to 16. Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers was another huge hit, as was the special Tournament Edition in the arcades. Basically, this included four machines that were connected up, and as soon as you won a fight, you were told which machine you had to go to next in order to continue the tournament. It was a bit strange, and a bit like musical chairs, but it foreshadowed the tournament modes now seen in every one-on-one fighting game available. Just as before, Capcom would later refine the proceedings again and update with Super Street Fighter II Turbo and Turbo X, but while the game was well-liked, the popularity of the series was beginning to wane.

Homeward bound

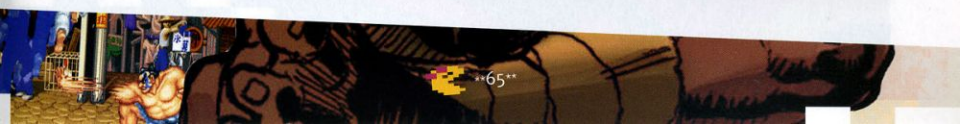
The series may have been suffering in the arcades, but it was thriving at home. Street Fighter II appeared on just about every viable platform, including a pretty horrible monochrome version on the humble Spectrum! The Amiga, Atari ST and PC versions were better, but they suffered from long loading times between fights.

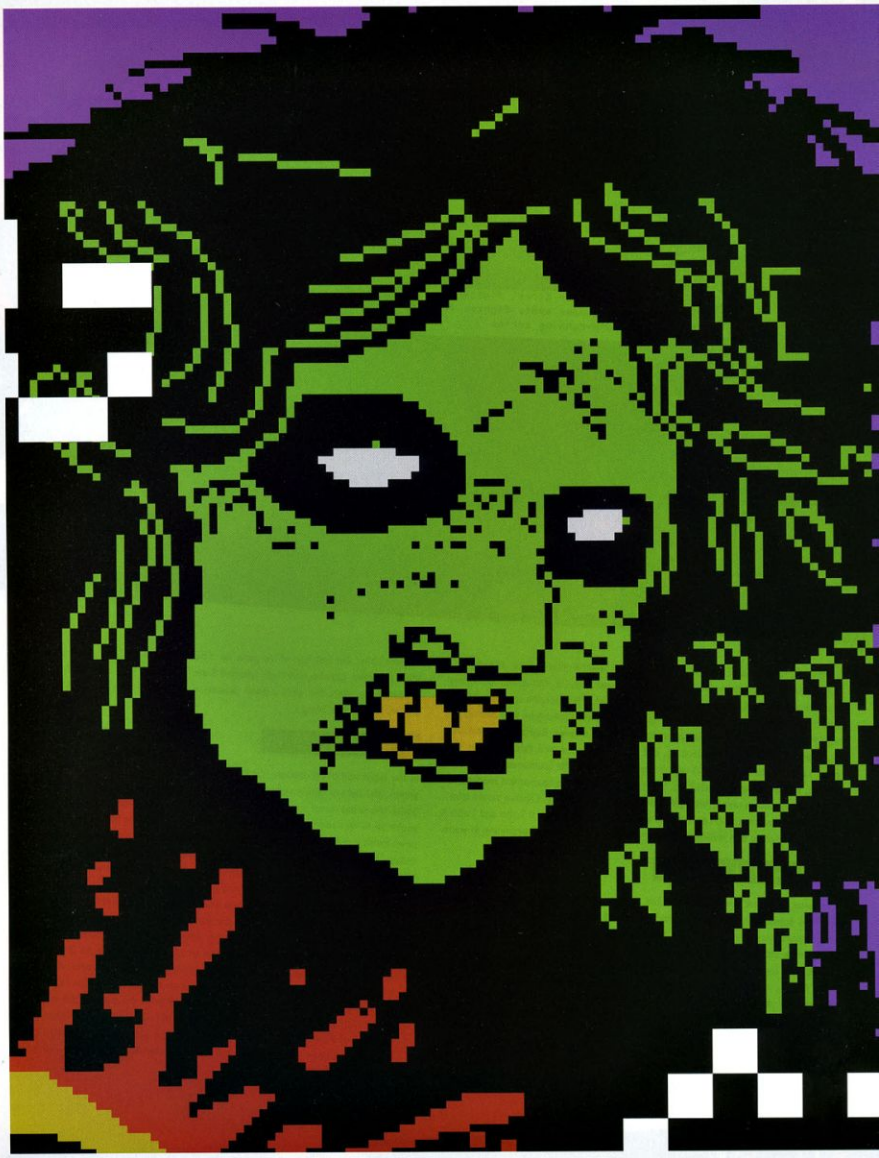
No such loading problems plagued the excellent SNES version though. Even at a hefty £64.99, it was a massive hit. Naturally, SNES owners spent most of the time that they weren't playing it taunting the Street Fighter-less Megadrive fans, although this was short lived as Capcom announced it was releasing Champion Edition on Sega's console. But Sega fans didn't have the upper hand for long, as Hyper Fighting was quickly announced for the SNES. In the end though, both consoles essentially got the same game, with the SNES having a brilliant conversion of Street Fighter II Turbo, while the Megadrive got Street Fighter II – Special Champion Edition, which was just Turbo with a different name. The last sign of the game on a home console was at the end of the SNES era, when Capcom and Virgin released Super Street Fighter II. It was only released in limited quantities, and while a good conversion, signalled the end of Street Fighter II. Well, for the time being...

Fighting fit

In the latter half of the decade, Capcom released a whole host of Street Fighter games, the best of which were Street Fighter EX + Alpha and Street Fighter Alpha 3. Sadly, the series never regained the popularity it had in the early 90s. However, if you're an SF fan and in need of a new fix, you'll no doubt be happy with the latest news coming out of Capcom HQ. With 2003 being the 15th anniversary of the series, the publisher has seen fit to issue a new version of the game. Hyper Street Fighter II: The Anniversary Edition will yet again have a graphical overhaul and will feature every single character from every edition of Street Fighter II. This means you'll be able to pit Ryu from Champion Edition against Ryu from Super Turbo X, and all kind of combinations. It'll also be released in a special box-set complete with a DVD of the fantastic animated movie and a whole host of other goodies.

Rest assured it'll probably be lapped up by an army of fans in no time. But, aside form nostalgia, just what is the future of the Street Fighter series? Any chance of a new SF game will no doubt depend on the success of The Anniversary Edition. Will Capcom take the leap and do a new title in the style of the mighty Soul Calibur II? Will they stick to 2D? Will anyone but the most ardent Street Fighter fan buy it? Whatever happens, Capcom can be safe in the knowledge that few games have been more influential in the games industry than Street Fighter. Sho-ryu-ken! RG





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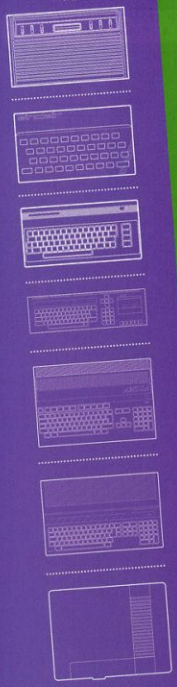


>Licence to Kill

Horror is hot once again, with recent movies like Freddy vs Jason, Jeepers Creepers 2 and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre surpassing all expectations at the box office. In time-honoured tradition, hit films lead to licensed games and, indeed, Vivendi Interactive is to release a game based upon the upcoming Van Helsing movie. Martyn Carroll casts a Marty Feldman-style eye over the history of horror licences, beginning with games that played the death march when your three lives had expired

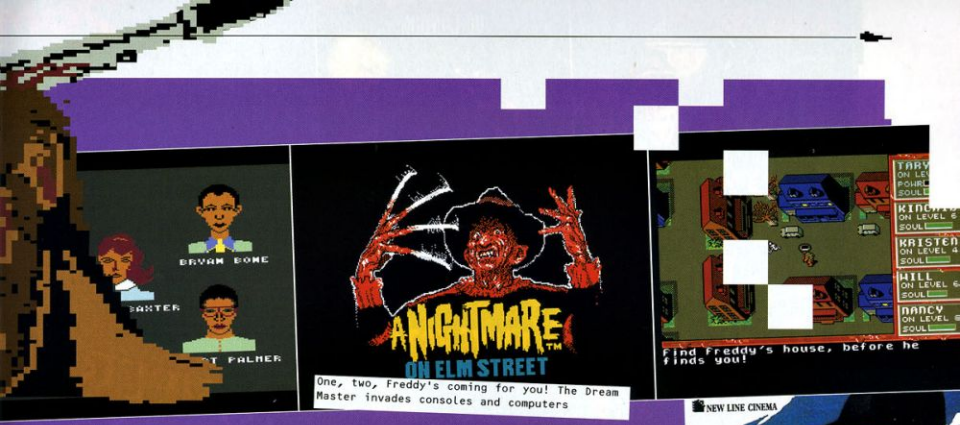
The original Texas Chainsaw Massacre movie spawned several sequels, last year's hit remake, and, in 1982, a game for the humble Atari 2600. Cited as "The First Violent Video Game!", it invited you to "play the part of the vengeful Leatherface or an innocent victim looking for safety". Considering the emotive advertising, it was no surprise to learn that distributor Wizard Games was headed by low budget-movie producer Charles Band. This title was followed by Halloween ("The game where HE comes home!"), in which you helped babysitter Laurie save kids from the hands of her brother Michael. While these games sound intriguing, the graphics were extremely basic and the sound was awful, even by 2600 standards. It was kind of hard to be scared of a beeping chainsaw or a shapeless 'shape'!

TCM and Halloween are two of the rarest 2600 games because many shops refused to stock them!

Jason lives

After five film outings, Jason Voorhees finally made his digital debut in Domark's Friday the 13th: The Computer Game. Released in 1985 on the Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC, the game featured the striking Final Chapter artwork on the packaging and came complete with free 'blood' capsules containing red sugar water. In the game, you controlled the female lead as she tried to protect her 10 fellow campers from the menacing Jason. Your first job was to take a cross from the nearby graveyard and place it in the barn, the library or the church. This then became the sanctuary where the campers could shelter as Jason would not dare enter. The only problem was that the campers soon became bored and wondered out into the open (presumably to have sex, smoke dope or go skinny dipping by moonlight). Unjustifiably trashed by critics at the time of release, the game featured a number of redeeming qualities which overshadow its crude visuals. One nice touch was that you could also become a killer by locating one of Jason's discarded weapons and attacking your friends. Another excellent feature was the thud of your heartbeat which increased rapidly when Jason was lurking nearby.

Better still was the Friday the 13th game that appeared on the NES in 1988, courtesy of LJN. Taking control of one of six playable characters, your aim was to destroy Jason while protecting the kids in the camp (which, rather strangely, was also home to a hoard of zombies). As you searched the


BRYAN BOWE
BAXTER
T PALMER
A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET
One, two, Freddy's coming for you! The Dream Master invades consoles and computers
Find Freddy's house, before he finds you!

local area for useful weapons, an alarm would signal that Jason was stalking one of the cabins. You then had only 60 seconds to stop Jason before the bodycount started to rise. As in the films, defeating Jason was downright difficult and on some occasions, you even had his mad mother to contend with! The game was certainly challenging, but also a lot of fun and probably preferable to sitting through one of the Friday the 13th movie sequels.

Here's Freddy!

Predictably enough, LJN released A Nightmare on Elm Street on the NES the following year. While the game was standard platform fare in which you had to find Freddy's bones and burn them in the boiler-room furnace to banish him, the development diary was slightly more interesting. Apparently, the player originally controlled Freddy but the idea of having a comedic child killer as a playable character did not sit well with Nintendo. LJN were forced to switch things around at the last minute, although screenshots of the original concept appeared in the gaming press, suggesting that a prototype of the game may once have existed.

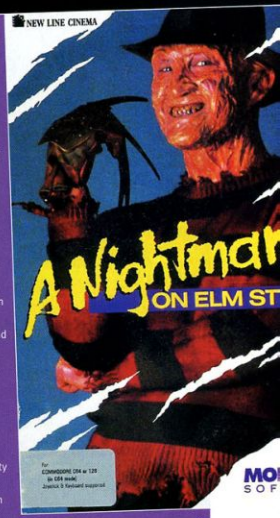
At around the same time, Monarch Software released an Elm Street game on the C64 (and later ported it to the PC). Unlike the LJN game, this version was far more episodic and followed the plot of the third film quite closely (it was subtitled Dream Warriors in fact). You began by selecting one of the five character from the film to play, all of which had their own specific 'dream power'. You then had to rescue the others from Freddy's house which, once inside, turned out to be a series of complex mazes containing monsters and traps. The action was viewed from a top-down perspective but 'action' is probably the wrong word as much of your time was spent solving increasingly perplexing puzzles. Only the most determined and deft gamers would make it through to the final battle with Freddy.

Universal appeal

Due to the graphical limitations of the 8-bit computers, the better horror conversions came along in the form of text adventures. Although the standard 'get key, go north' approach was often associated with bespectacled young males and blokes with beards, many of these adventures were extremely literate and featured fiendish puzzles. Software house CRL excelled in their quartet of horror film tie-ins for the Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad CPC, yet they insisted on submitting each game to the BBFC. As the guidelines state that all video games are exempt from classification unless they depict "gross violence towards humans or animals to any significant extent", CRL's actions were viewed purely as a bid to attain some free publicity.

While featuring no explicit text, their first release, Dracula (1986), included a small number of gory screenshots which were intended to offend the BBFC and therefore warrant an 18 rating. However, our beloved censors were obviously made of stronger stuff and only a 15 rating was issued. Programmed by acclaimed adventure author Rod Pike, the game itself was an atmospheric mix of gothic descriptions and fiendish puzzles. Taking on the role of Jonathan Harker, you began the game in a Transylvanian inn the night before your trip to deliver the deeds of Carrfax Hall to the Count's castle. After signing the register and obtaining your room key, you were provided with a seat at the dinner table. An interesting problem here was that the food you chose from the menu would have a direct effect on your dreams when you retired later in the evening. A dodgy combination often resulted in a gory death as your nightmares became reality, especially if you failed to light your bedside lamp and close the bedroom window before you slept.

Naturally, CRL followed Dracula a year later with Frankenstein, another excellent text adventure that proved to be similar in style and content to its predecessor. You began the game as Victor Frankenstein and your mission was to locate the monster that you created four years previously. When you eventually tracked him down, you were provided with the dubious pleasure of controlling the creature's actions yourself. Using the original novel for references, Rod Pike attempted to emphasise the monster's inherent humanity by trying to make the player sympathise with its plight: "There are no bolts though his neck", he explained, "I wanted to get the atmosphere and pathos of Mary Shelly's novel rather that the gore of the Hammer films". As a result, the small number of detailed illustrations still only received a 15 rating.



Undeterred, CRL finally succeeded with their version of Jack the Ripper (1988), the first game ever to receive an 18 certificate. Playing the part of a Victorian gent, the game began when you accidentally bumped into the Ripper as he fled from a Whitechapel crime scene. As you investigated his handiwork, the police arrived and accused you of the murder. Naturally, you were coerced into proving your innocence by trailing and exposing the man (or indeed men) involved.

Through its vivid use of prose and the subtle accuracy of the murder descriptions, the game succeeded in recreating both the atmosphere of Victorian London and the horror generated by the killer's unmotivated attacks. Programmed by Irish authors St Brides, CRL added the gory illustrations prior to release in their commercial aim to secure that elusive 18 rating. Deemed "unnecessarily distasteful" by Sinclair User magazine at the time of release, the graphical limitations of the 8-bit machines meant that apparent acts of "gross violence" were merely poor depictions of bloody corpses.

In the same year, Rod Pike developed Wolfman, his third horror text adventure

for CRL, but this well-written three-part title became lost in the ratings hype surrounding Jack the Ripper and was sadly overlooked by the press and public alike. As the title character, you awoke in a strange hovel, covered in blood and with no memory of the previous night's events. A mob of incensed villagers had surrounded the house, proclaiming that the Mayor's daughter had been killed – her throat ripped out. As the guilty party, your first task was to cover your tracks before escaping the village in search of a faraway temple where you could be cured of your bloodlust. Along the way you met a young girl named Nardia and you had to play from her perspective on several occasions.

Bloody bits

Ariolasoft seized the opportunity to capitalise on CRL's Frankenstein by releasing a game based on the Bride of Frankenstein movie. Neglecting the serious text-driven approach, Bride was a comical graphic adventure in which you controlled the title character in her hunt for the perfect husband. Set in Castle Frankenstein, you had to dodge various ghosts and skeletons as you searched the crypts and corridors for various body parts. Upon locating the brain, you could spark off the honeymoon by unlocking the laboratory and electrifying your man's vital organs.

Considering the inordinate cost of licensing fees, many software releases relied on unofficial yet blatant titles. Ariloasoft (under the guise of Viz Design) followed Bride with Werewolves of London (1988), a game evidently based on An American Werewolf in London. Adopting a similar 2D viewpoint to Bride, Werewolf saw you wandering around nondescript streets solving simple puzzles. These tasks were hindered because a full-moon signalled your transformation into the snarling title character, allowing you to release your repressed frustrations upon London's policemen, traffic wardens and underground commuters.

Another unlicensed product was Ubisoft's Zombi (1990), which proved to be a faithful interpretation of George Romero's Dawn of the Dead, right down to the zombie-infested shopping mall (with a helicopter on the roof) and the impending attack of the Hell's Angels. You took control of four characters and the main aim was to escape the mall by helicopter. From a first-person perspective, you had to search the mall for precious food while fending off the lumbering living dead. As in the film, looting the various shops for food and ammunition was the key to survival. Originally written for 8-bit computers, Zombi later appeared on the Amiga and Atari ST in a better-looking version.

Barking mad

The work of Clive Barker has been represented in several computer games, the most well-known being Ocean's Nightbreed games. The first one, Nightbreed: The Action Game, appeared in 1988 on 8-bit and 16-bit machines. Based on Barker's epic movie, which in turn was based on his book Cabal, the game placed you in control of Aaron Boone as you ventured into the underground city of Midian in search of your girlfriend Lori. Standing in your way were the Nightbreed themselves and a bunch of rednecks who have stumbled upon Midian. Your chief adversary, though, was a mass-murderer known as The Mask.

As the title suggests, Nightbreed: The Action Game saw you kicking and punching your way down into the depth of Midian. The sequel, however, was subtitled The Interactive Movie and only released on PC, Amiga and Atari ST. Like many of Ocean's film licences, the result was an uneven mix of several mini-games, each based on a certain scene from the film. In fact, the game adhered to the plot of the film so closely that the player was forced into following a strictly linear path. The Interactive Movie was a step down from the first game and it sold poorly, canning the third game in what was originally slated as a trilogy of titles based on the film.

Two titles based on the Hellraiser films befell the same fate. The first, simply entitled Hellraiser, was developed in 1990 for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) by Color Dreams. Uniquely, the Hellraiser cartridge was rumoured to contain extra memory and an additional processor chip, allowing the game to display 16-bit style graphics and run three times faster than standard NES titles. Unfortunately, the cost of producing such a cartridge was judged to be too great

Descend into the depths of Midian in Ocean's gruesome twosome

and this ambitious project was scrapped with no prototype produced. As a result, very little is know about the game except that Color Dreams planned to cut the costs by releasing Hellraiser on the PC. The title was to be based around Wolfenstein (the forerunner to Doom) and it would even use Id's 3D engine, suggesting that Hellraiser was a first-person action adventure.

In 1995, Magnet Interactive Studios secured the licence and they set about developing Hellraiser: Virtual Hell for the PC. It too was a 3D adventure game in which you had to escape from the fiery depths of Hell. Along the way you encountered Pinhead and Pinball – a new Cenobite who could throw steel spheres, Phantasm-style. Doug Bradley lent his voice to the game during a day off from filming the fourth Hellraiser movie, and a rolling demo was produced that showed Pinhead emerging from a computer screen to swallow up the player, but Magnet could not find a publisher and the plug was pulled on Virtual Hell.

Although it is unlikely that the games mentioned here will ever become collector's items, they prove to be an intriguing element of the modern movie package. Who knows – perhaps one day we'll see an old licensed game turning up as a bonus item on the film's DVD release. RG*

Virtual Hell failed to materialise, but many screens are floating around the Web

>Something Evil...

Palace Pictures shot to fame in the early 80s when they picked up The Evil Dead for UK distribution. The cheaply made horror movie was a huge cult hit, and it wasn't long before Palace's software arm released a tie-in game for the Spectrum, C64 and BBC Micro. All three versions were generally the same, although the Spectrum version supported the Currah Speech hardware add-on. It was used to good effect, voicing lines from the film such as the Evil Dead's plea of "Join us...join us".

The gameplay took place within the cabin and the action was viewed from above. As Ash, you had to keep the Evil Dead out by moving from room to room closing the windows. If, or rather when, your friends became possessed, you had to destroy them using a variety of weapons (axe, spade, chainsaw and so on). The head, torso and legs of each body would then attack! When you had disposed of all these parts, the Necronomicon appeared and you had to throw it onto the fire. The game then began again, but the difficulty level was increased.

Extremely simplistic by today's standards, The Evil Dead is nevertheless fun to play (for about five minutes anyway). It is also rather rare so count yourself lucky if you come across a copy. The Spectrum version is particularly uncommon as it was never actually released as a main title. Instead, it was sneaked onto the b-side of Palace's excellent Cauldron game.

The Evil Dead game appeared on home computers in 1985, after the movie had been banned under the Video Recording Act!

90% Games Master ★★★★★ "Simply wonderful. Simply essential" PLAY 6/5 "It blows the competition away." PSW MUST BUY

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1983

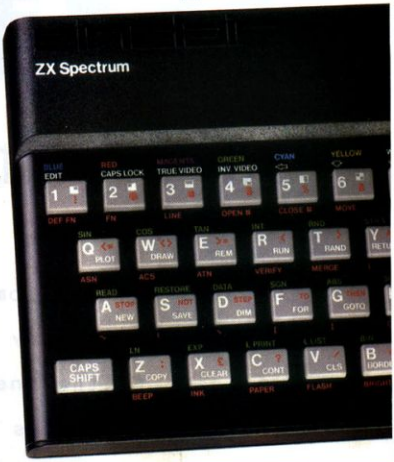
advertising gallery

20 years ago and computer magazines were very different to the ones you read today. Besides pages and pages of program listings, there were always a number of classic adverts. We've selected our favourites from this classic year. Some signal the arrival of important milestones in computing history, while others just made us smile...

Sinclair ZX Spect

16K or 48K RAM... full-size moving-key keyboard... colour and sound... high-resolution graphics...

From only £125!



First, there was the world-beating Sinclair ZX80. The first personal computer for under £100.

Then, the ZX81. With up to 16K RAM available, and the ZX Printer. Giving more power and more flexibility. Together, they've sold over 500,000 so far, to make Sinclair world leaders in personal computing. And the ZX81 remains the ideal low-cost introduction to computing.

Now there's the ZX Spectrum! With up to 48K of RAM. A full-size moving-key keyboard. Vivid colour and sound. High-resolution graphics. And a low price that's unrivalled.

Professional power–personal computer price!

The ZX Spectrum incorporates all the proven features of the ZX81. But its new 16K BASIC ROM dramatically increases your computing power.

You have access to a range of 8 colours for foreground, background and border, together with a sound generator and high-resolution graphics.

You have the facility to support separate data files.

You have a choice of storage capacities (governed by the amount of RAM). 16K of RAM (which you can uprate later to 48K of RAM) or a massive 48K of RAM.

Yet the price of the Spectrum 16K is an amazing £125! Even the popular 48K version costs only £175!

You may decide to begin with the 16K version. If so, you can still return it later for an upgrade. The cost? Around £60.

Ready to use today, easy to expand tomorrow

Your ZX Spectrum comes with a mains adaptor and all the necessary leads to connect to most cassette recorders and TVs (colour or black and white).

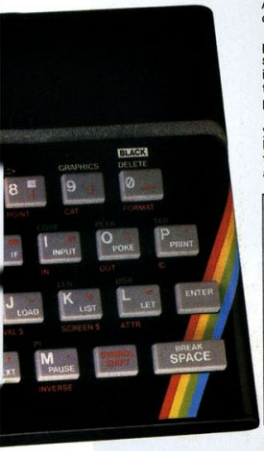
Employing Sinclair BASIC (now used in over 500,000 computers worldwide) the ZX Spectrum comes complete with two manuals which together represent a detailed course in BASIC programming. Whether you're a beginner or a competent programmer, you'll find them both of immense help. Depending on your computer experience, you'll quickly be moving into the colourful world of ZX Spectrum professional-level computing.

There's no need to stop there. The ZX Printer – available now – is fully compatible with the ZX Spectrum. And later this year there will be Microdrives for massive amounts of extra on-line storage, plus an RS232 / network interface board.

Key features of the Sinclair ZX Spectrum

- Full colour – 8 colours each for foreground, background and border, plus flashing and brightness-intensity control.
- Sound – BEEP command with variable pitch and duration.
- Massive RAM – 16K or 48K.
- Full-size moving-key keyboard – all keys at normal typewriter pitch, with repeat facility on each key.
- High-resolution – 256 dots horizontally x 192 vertically, each individually addressable for true high-resolution graphics.
- ASCII character set – with upper- and lower-case characters.
- Teletext-compatible – user software can generate 40 characters per line or other settings.
- High speed LOAD & SAVE – 16K in 100 seconds via cassette, with VERIFY & MERGE for programs and separate data files.
- Sinclair 16K extended BASIC – incorporating unique 'one-touch' keyword entry, syntax check, and report codes.

um



ZX Spectrum software on cassettes – available now

The Spectrum software library is growing every day. Subjects include games, education, and business/household management. Flight Simulation...Chess...Planetoids...History...Inventions...VU-CALC...VU-3D...Club Record Controller...there is something for everyone. And they all make full use of the Spectrum's colour, sound, and graphics capabilities. You'll receive a detailed catalogue with your Spectrum.

ZX Expansion Module

This module incorporates the three functions of Microdrive controller, local area network, and RS232 interface. Connect it to your Spectrum and you can control up to eight Microdrives, communicate with other computers, and drive a wide range of printers.

The potential is enormous, and the module will be available in the early part of 1983 for around £30.

sinclair

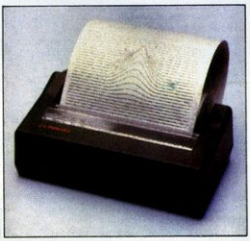
Sinclair Research Ltd, Stanhope Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 3PS.
Tel: Camberley (0276) 685311.

The ZX Printer – available now

Designed exclusively for use with the Sinclair ZX range of computers, the printer offers ZX Spectrum owners the full ASCII character set – including lower-case characters and high-resolution graphics.

A special feature is COPY which prints out exactly what is on the whole TV screen without the need for further instructions. Printing speed is 50 characters per second, with 32 characters per line and 9 lines per vertical inch.

The ZX Printer connects to the rear of your ZX Spectrum. A roll of paper (65ft long and 4in wide) is supplied, along with full instructions. Further supplies of paper are available in packs of five rolls.



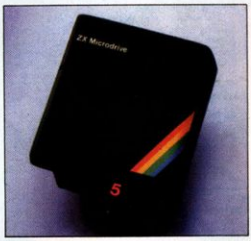
The ZX Microdrive – coming soon

The new Microdrives, designed especially for the ZX Spectrum, are set to change the face of personal computing by providing mass on-line storage.

Each Microdrive can hold up to 100K bytes using a single interchangeable storage medium.

The transfer rate is 16K bytes per second, with an average access time of 3.5 seconds. And you'll be able to connect up to 8 Microdrives to your Spectrum via the ZX Expansion Module.

A remarkable breakthrough at a remarkable price. The Microdrives will be available in the early part of 1983 for around £50.



How to order your ZX Spectrum

BY PHONE – Access, Barclaycard or Trustcard holders can call 01-200 0200 for personal attention 24 hours a day, every day. BY FREEPOST – use the no-stamp needed coupon below. You can pay by cheque, postal order, Barclaycard, Access or Trustcard.

EITHER WAY – please allow up to 28 days for delivery. And there's a 14-day money-back option, of course. We want you to be satisfied beyond doubt – and we have no doubt that you will be.

To: Sinclair Research, FREEPOST, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3BR. **Order**

Qty	Item	Code	Item Price £	Total £
	Sinclair ZX Spectrum – 16K RAM version	100	125.00	
	Sinclair ZX Spectrum – 48K RAM version	101	175.00	
	Sinclair ZX Printer	27	59.95	
	Printer paper (pack of 5 rolls)	16	11.95	
	Postage and packing: orders under £100	28	2.95	
	orders over £100	29	4.95	
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The original ZX Spectrum advert. All this for £125!

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We believe that with the launch of our MCP 40 colour printer, and our combined computer/software value packs, we will continue to lead the small micro market in both quality and value.

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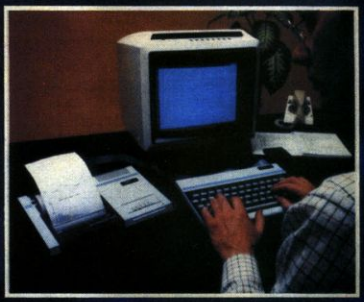
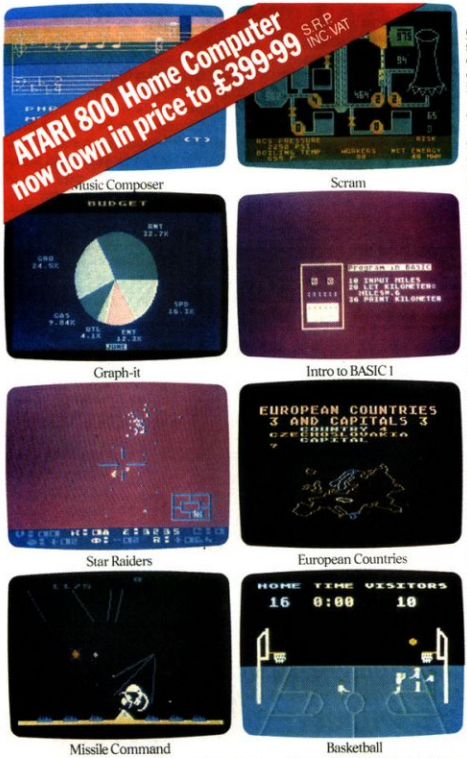


Oric looked to cash in on the success of the Spectrum



3.7 million reasons why the Atari Home Computer is something to see. The display screen used with our computers is composed of 192 horizontal lines, each containing 320 dots. Delivering colour and luminosity instructions to each dot for a second requires 3.7 million cycles...a lot of work for the normal 6502 processor.

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That's a quality you just don't find in ordinary home computers. And it's one of the reasons some computer experts say that Atari computers are so far ahead of their time.

There's more...which is what you'd expect from Atari Language. The Atari Home Computer uses several programming languages to give the user maximum control of its extraordinary capabilities. PILOT, Microsoft BASIC and Atari BASIC are understood and spoken by the Atari computer. You'll also find our Assembler Editor cartridge indispensable for machine language programming.

Sound. An Atari computer has four sound generators, or voices, activated by a separate microchip. This leaves the principal microprocessor chips free to perform other tasks. And you can take full advantage of this capability which is designed for easy programming.

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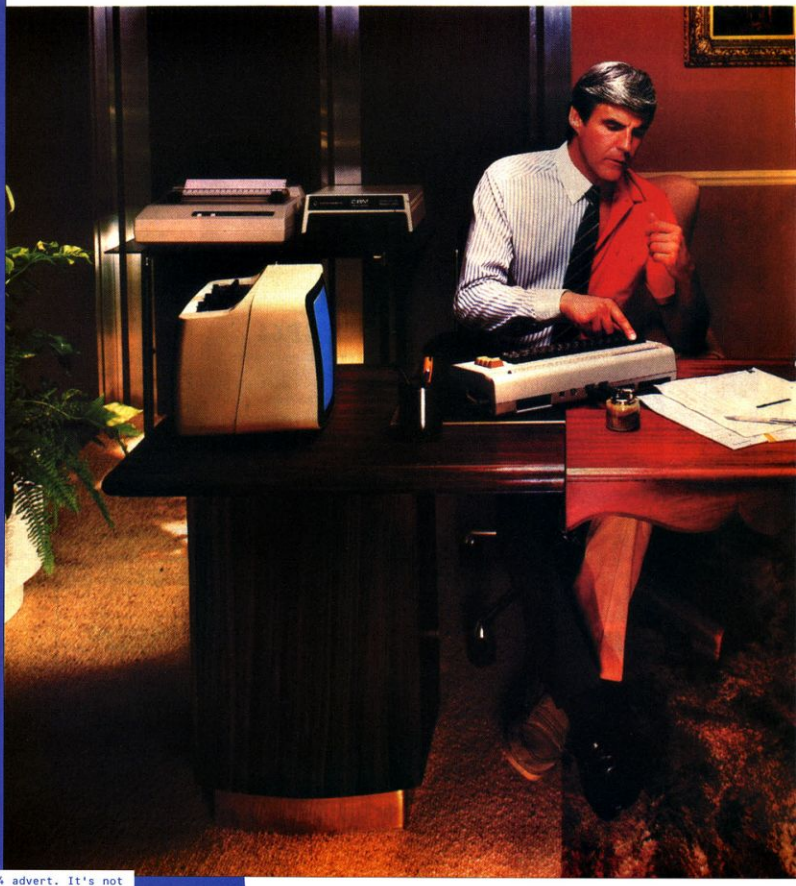
The range of software – general and specific – is very extensive, and covers financial planning, word processing, information handling and countless other business and personal tasks.

The Commodore 64 is the ideal personal computer for the office. It is also ideal for the home, whether this is your 'second office' or main place of business.

It means that the scope of take-home work is no longer limited to what papers can be carried in a bulging briefcase.

A Commodore 64 at home could allow you access to all the information stored at your company office immediately, easily and with complete security, simply by linking up to any TV set or monitor.

For the office. Or the



A classic C64 advert. It's not just a games machine you know

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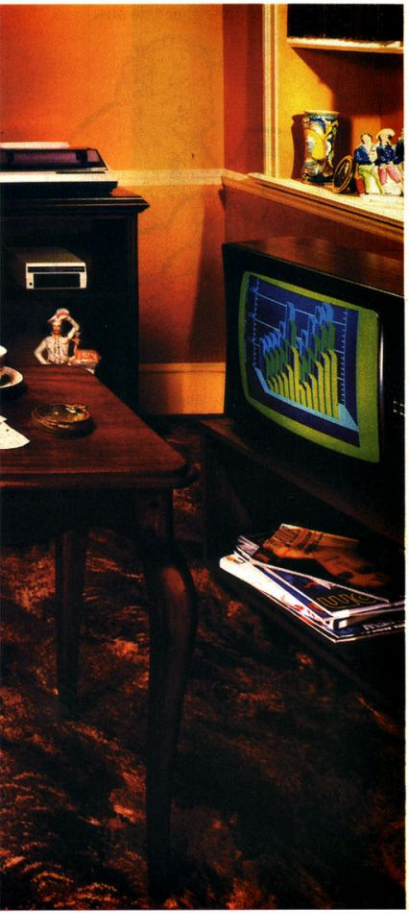
You could also link up with other Commodore 64s: in branch offices, for example, or in colleagues' homes, with instant exchange of information.

You could also plug in to half a million pages of Prestel information, making use of key figures in combination with your own calculations for such statistics as you might need; or for other business uses, like car hire and hotel bookings.

The Commodore 64 means maximum flexibility,

nome office.



and provides the facts on which you can base sound business decisions.

INVALUABLE TO ANY BUSINESS

The Commodore 64 is the perfect computer for your own business, whatever its size. As well as the advantages we've already mentioned, it has a great capacity for expansion, and when combined with various peripherals** it is superbly flexible. Whether it's looking after personnel records or creating models, say, for sales forecasts, it will quickly prove to be of vital importance to any well run concern.

MORE POWER TO THE STUDENTS

A Commodore 64 in education puts more computer power at students' disposal. Subjects include maths, from basic arithmetic to higher functions; vocabulary building; elementary science; basic geography; and of course, learning computing.

FOR EVERYONE WHO HAS A HOBBY

Apart from being an absorbing and fascinating pastime in itself, the Commodore 64 can be a tremendous help in countless hobbies. It's equally happy collating recipes for a cook or choosing moves for a chess enthusiast.

In short, the Commodore 64 is one of the most outstanding microcomputers ever built. Outperforming all other computers in its class (some at twice the price), it's the ideal business partner.
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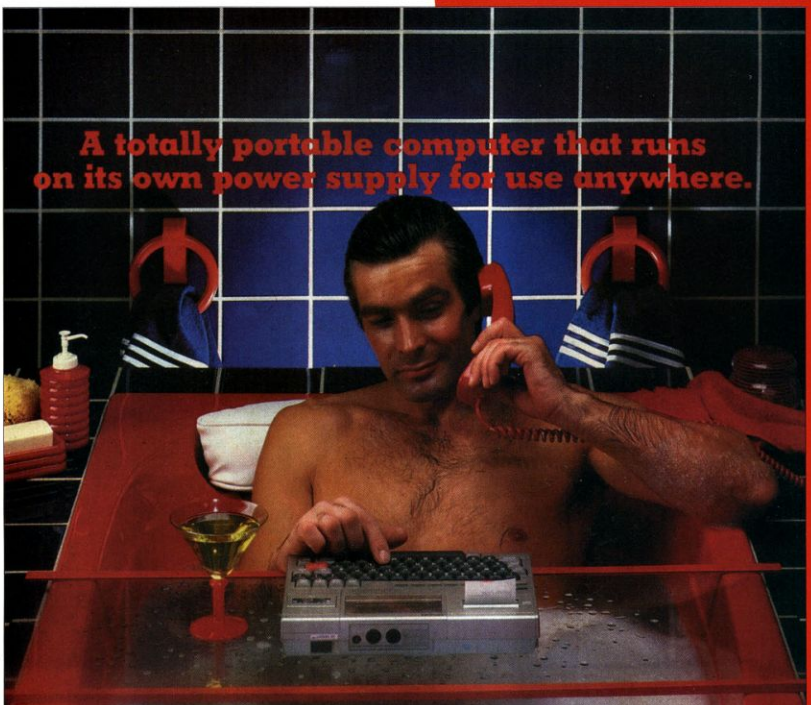
Wow! It's like something from the original Star Trek series!



It could mean the end of the rubber duck as we know it.

The HX-20 is a portable computer with a full size typewriter keyboard, LCD Virtual Screen, printer and micro-cassette facility actually built in. A computer with a rechargeable power source that's large enough for writing programs and manipulating data virtually anywhere, yet small enough to carry in a briefcase.

But don't let the size fool you. The HX-20 is not a gimmicky toy or an excuse for a calculator. It's a precision machine using a full extended version of Microsoft BASIC with 16k RAM, optionally expandable to 32k and 32k ROM expandable to 64k. RS-232C and Serial interfaces. The ASCII typewriter keyboard and five programmable keys brings ten separate program functions to your fingertips.

Power to your elbow.

The HX-20 runs on its own power supply for over 50 hours and can be easily recharged overnight, or whilst in use, with the ability to retain its memory in RAM even when switched off.

Keeping you in the picture.

The LCD screen is unique – showing any 20 characters by 4 lines at a time – enabling you to carry out word processing or data entry as if you are using a large screen.

Print Out. Built In.

The 24 column dot matrix impact micro-printer offers 42 LPM in a crisp, precise 5 x 7 matrix for perfect hard copies. Every time. And you can choose from a wide range of peripherals from bar code readers to acoustic couplers for total capability.

Epson. Reliability through Research.

You'll find our name on a highly successful range of computer printers. So you can be assured of the same quality and reliability through an extensive research programme prior to the launch of any Epson product.

Write or call us for further details and the name of your local stockist (because seeing really is believing).

You'll find that the HX-20 is the most complete portable computer you can buy. It could even change the face of bathtime.

Which is a bad day for ducks.

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HX-20
PORTABLE COMPUTER

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Extraordinary product. Exceptional quality.

Brings new meaning to the term multitasking

LOOK FOR ULTIMATE SIGN FOR THE ULTIMATE GAMES
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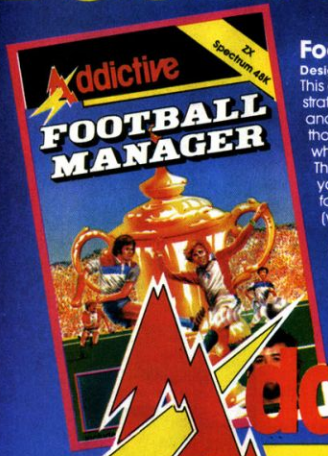
Little yellow jobbie, leave my plant alone. Oy, Mr. Plant's trying to get some sleep. Buds sucking the life from my thingy. Bugs munching my leaves. Can't have that, Mustn't drain, Mustn't die. Mustn't get eaten. Mustn't die. Right, that's it. Time to get tough. Mustn't die. Right, that's it. Time to get tough. Mustn't die. Right, that's it. Time to get tough

The No.1 Football Game

ZX Spectrum 48K, ZX81 16K
BBC and Dragon versions coming soon!



Football Manager

Designed by Kevin Toms

This outstanding game of skill and strategy is now widely available and you can join the many thousands of satisfied customers who have purchased the game. This is no five minute wonder – you will be playing this game for hours over many weeks (we know – our customers tell us!).

Kevin Toms

Some of the features of the game:–

- ★ Matches in 3D graphics
- ★ Transfer market
- ★ Promotion and relegation
- ★ F.A. Cup matches
- ★ Injury problems
- ★ Full league tables
- ★ Four Divisions
- ★ Pick your own team for each match
- ★ As many seasons as you like
- ★ Managerial rating
- ★ 7 skill levels
- ★ Save game facility

Addictive

*ZX81 Chart, Home Computing Weekly 16.8.83

Programmers
We want your software. Send us a sample. If accepted, we will supply generous royalties plus free cash advances plus free advice from Kevin himself!

Comments about the game from press and our customers

"FOOTBALL MANAGER is the best game I have yet seen on the Spectrum and my personal favourite of all the games on any micro ... To the ordinary person it is an excellent view of what can be done in the field of computer games ... The crowning glory of this game is the short set pieces of match highlights which show little stick men running around a pitch, shooting, defending and scoring ... It is a compulsive game but people who cannot take game sessions of 9 hours or so, which happened on one happy Sunday, will be grateful to know that there is a 'save to tape' option. FOOTBALL MANAGER has everything it could ... The originator, Addictive Games, certainly deserve the name." Rating: 19/20 (Practical Computing – August 1983).

"When I first received this game I spent the best part of the weekend playing it. Since then I have returned to it more often than any other. The truly addictive quality of this game is the remarkable way it mirrors the real football manager's problems ..." (Personal Computer Games – Summer 1983)

"It's my own fault you *did* warn me – I am totally and completely hooked on FOOTBALL MANAGER." (Mr. A. Wright – Lancashire.)

"It is by far the best software game that I have seen for the Spectrum." (Mr. N. Lincoln – Surrey.)

"I congratulate you for a marvellous game which keeps the player enthralled." (Mr. N. Creasey – Gerrard's Cross.)

"I am writing to say what a great game it is. I have spent over 45 hours on it." (Mr. D. Fearn – Gloucestershire.)

"Your FOOTBALL MANAGER game is terrific." (Mr. N. Cumming – West Bromwich.)

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Ah, Kevin Toms. His bearded face was a reassuring sign of quality

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Emulation nation

Reading and reminiscing about retro games is one thing, but what if you want to walk the full length of memory lane and actually play these classic titles? The easiest and least expensive way is through emulation. Martyn Carroll looks at the many emulators available for your home PC

Emulating computers

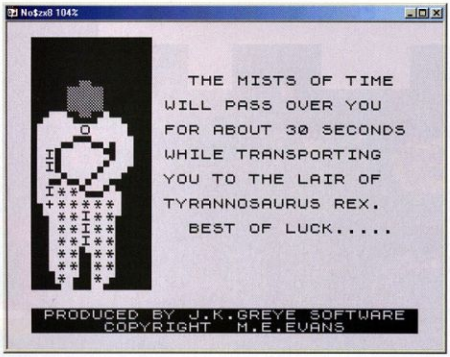
Emulation is very popular. One of the very first emulation Web sites, Emulators Unlimited (www.emuunlim.com), is fast approaching the 15-million hit mark! The site is home to hundreds of different utilities that collectively emulate any old console or computer you could care to mention. Whether you want to play Atari 2600 games on your PC, revisit the Amiga Workbench or test-drive the Gameboy Advance before you buy one, you'll find an emulator that will do just the job.

Because there are generally many different programs that emulate the same machines (there are over a dozen Spectrum emulators for example), the obvious question is which one do you opt for? The choice is often complicated because emulators often stem from the source code of other emulators. First and foremost, you require a program which faithfully replicates the machine in question. That means it emulates each hardware component and runs all of the available software – compatibility is key. Secondly, as the software is usually written by enthusiasts rather than professional programmers, you require a program which is easy to set-up and use (and includes relevant user information). Last and least, you'll be looking for an emulator with a few bells and whistles – one which lets you control games using your PC joystick, for instance, and allows you to save your progress while playing.

The aim of the article is to look at each popular platform of yesteryear (and a few not so popular) and pick out the best emulators for each computer or console. All of the programs mentioned can be found on the Retro Gamer * coverdisc.

A number of readers will fondly remember the Sinclair ZX81 (and perhaps its even more primitive forerunner, the ZX80). For many enthusiasts, these cheap and cheerful machines were single-handedly responsible for igniting their interest in computers. If you're looking to relive a little bit of computing history by emulating a ZX80/81 on your PC then you can use either Xtender2 or NO$ZX81.

The Xtender2 readme goes out of its way to ward you off by stating that the program is "NOT user-friendly" and "NOT intended for regular users". NO$ZX81 does at least include common sense documentation but development has ceased and the emulator has been discontinued. Serious bugs, and there are several, are seemingly there to stay, although it does work with the majority of programs I tested. Despite the warnings in the readme, Xtender2 isn't too difficult to use and it also runs native software without a hitch. The main difference between NO$ZX81 and Xtender2 is that the former does not support high-resolution graphics whereas the latter supports all graphics modes.



How far back can you go? How about a game of 3D Monster Maze on the ZX81?

ZX80/81 emulators are rare but if you're looking to emulate the subsequent Sinclair machine, the ZX Spectrum, you'll be spoilt for choice. There are literally dozens of Spectrum emulators available and some of them have been in development so long that they emulate the host machine perfectly. One such example is ZX32, which emulates all of the Spectrum models from the humble 16Kb version right up to the floppy disk-driven +3. The program will even check the software you want to load and default to the best model for running it. ZX32 supports all of the popular file types, including the .tzx file format which is regarded as the best way of preserving Spectrum software in its original form.

The irrepressibl Sinclair Spectru Perhaps the most emulated machine in existence

Development of ZX32 appears to have stopped, so if you're looking for a cutting-edge Spectrum emulator you should take a look at RealSpectrum. It runs all Spectrum software without a hitch and yet also expands upon ZX32 by emulating various hardware add-ons such as the ZX Interface 1, the DISCIPLE/+D disk interface and the Kempston mouse. You can even use it to set up Spectrum network over the Web! Note that there are several versions of the emulator, each one optimised to work with different processors.

There are several emulators available for Sir Clive's last Sinclair machine, the rather grand sounding Sinclair QL (Quantum Leap). The majority are shareware though (meaning you must pay if you want to use the emulator after the free trial period). One completely free QL emulator is QLAYw. It is no longer developed and therefore slightly lacking in some departments, but it's easy enough to set up (don't forget to assign the ROM file you want to run to a Microdrive port!) and offers faithful QL emulator.

More 8-bit micros

The Spectrum's main competition in the home-computer market came from the Commodore 64 and the Vic 20. WinVICE emulates both machines, as well as other models in the Commodore range, including the original PET computers, the CBM-II and the Commodore 128. The program is extremely stable and the latest version simply fixes a few bugs caused by individual games. WinVICE is so popular that other Commodore emulators are generally ignored. However, if you're looking for a dedicated C64 emulator you should try Frodo, a program which focuses on reproducing special graphical effects exactly and includes support for various peripherals.

VICE: C128 emulator at 75% speed, 30 fps
File Snapshot Options Settings Help
COMMODORE BASIC V7.0 122365 BYTES FREE
(C)1985 COMMODORE ELECTRONICS, LTD.
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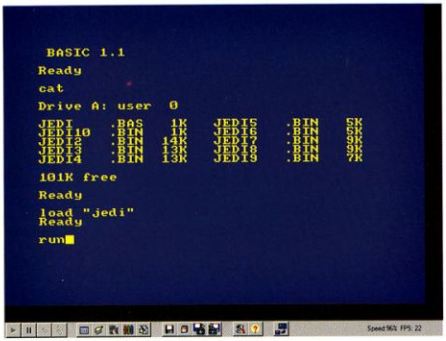
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
READY.

WinVICE is a one-stop shop for your Commodore emulation needs

WinVICE also offers support for the Commodore 16 and Plus/4 models, but if you're looking for a dedicated emulator then try either Minus4w or Artifex. Both emulators are very similar and they run all software I tested (including dedicated Plus/4 games). They even include the 3-in-1 office suite built into the Plus/4!



Loading disk images in WinAPE can be tricky – this screenshot shows you how

Due to their relative lack of popularity at the time, Amstrad's range of CPC computers are not as well supported in the emulation scene. There are, however, a couple of good emulators in the form of WinAPE and Arnold. WinAPE accurately emulates the entire CPC range (including the CPC+ models) but it can be difficult to get up and running, especially if you're unfamiliar with Amstrad BASIC. Thankfully, the Running Programs chapter in the Help text steps you through the process. Similarly, Arnold can be confusing to use but all the help you need is included in the readme file. There is very little to choose between the two emulators except that Arnold features a number of configurable options, including one which allows purists to change to a green screen display (CPCs were originally purchased with either a green screen or colour monitor).

The Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad computers dominated the European home-computer market throughout the 1980s and any other manufacturer that dared enter the fray was immediately fighting a losing battle. Three early computer casualties were the Jupiter Ace, the Oric-1 and the Atari 800. While largely ignored and rare as a result, there are dedicated emulators available to download. Ace32 is a Jupiter Ace emulator that runs under DOS. It works fine under Windows too – just refer to the readme for the various keyboard commands. Development of this program appears to have discontinued but it runs the small amount of software available for download from the Web without a hitch.

Euphoric allows you to emulate the Oric-1 and its lesser known successors, the Atmos and the Telestrat. Unusually, this emulator installs itself on your system but this does mean that you can easily launch tape and disc files by simply double-clicking them from within Windows Explorer. This saves you from having to use Oric Extended BASIC to launch programs. If you're looking to emulate the Atari 800 computer you can use Atari800Win – a program which accurately emulates all hardware aspects of the machine and can also be configured to behave like any of the Atari 8-bit models (including the XL and XE variations). If features full sound support and is able to emulate both the Atari disk drives and cartridge slot. Unlike many of the programs mentioned here, the ROM files required to run the emulator are not provided so you'll need to obtain them from the Web. However, the accompanying readme file tells you exactly which files you need, where to get them and what to do with them.

The Atari 800 was home to one of the very best versions of Pitfall 2

mac attack!

Ask anyone who works in a design department if they prefer to work on PCs or Apple Macs and they'll unanimously opt for the latter. It seems that designers prefer to use Macintosh software over Windows software. Compared to PCs, Macs are more expensive and less popular, but you can use an emulator to run Mac OS on your PC.

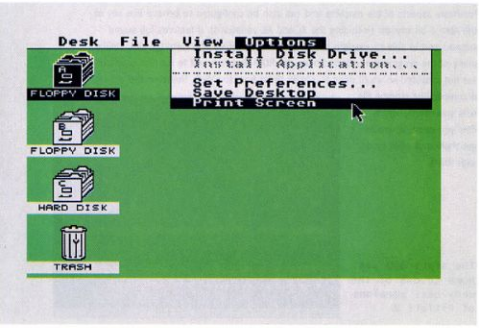
Emulators, Inc. produce three different Macintosh emulators designed to handle all versions of Mac OS on different types of PCs. Fusion is a free emulator aimed at DOS users that is recommended for use on 486 and Pentium systems. It runs System 7.0 and 7.1 as well as Mac OS version 7.5, 7.6, 8.0 and 8.1. Gemulator 2000 is a basic Mac Classic emulator that is capable of running System 6.0, 7.0 and 7.5. It is especially useful for running old Mac Plus and Mac Classic games which may not even work on newer Macs. Finally, SoftMac 2000 emulates the Mac Classic, Mac II, Mac LC, Mac Quadra and all versions of Mac OS up to 8.1.

Here's the best bit – all three programs deliver around 70% of the clock speed in emulation. This basically means that a 500MHz Windows PC will emulate the equivalent of a 300MHz Macintosh running Mac OS 8.

You can emulate old or new Apple Macs (and even the Lisa) using various emulators

16-bit models

Atari enjoyed greater success with its 16-bit ST machine. WinSTon is branded as the definitive Atari ST emulator for Windows as it's very stable, offers excellent software compatibility (especially with games) and features full sound support. It's ideal for beginners too because it's very easy to set up and yet packs in enough features to satisfy experienced ST users. You can use it to emulate an ST hard drive with up to four partitions and it is possible to read original ST disks using you PC's floppy disk drive. Earlier versions required you to locate the TOS (Tramiel Operating System) ROM but the latest release includes the file, so you can revisit the familiar green desktop without searching the Internet beforehand. WinSTon only emulates the standard ST machine. If you're looking to emulate the expanded model, the Atari STE, you will need to use Steem. This new emulator runs all of the standard ST software as well as the rarer STE releases. You do need to obtain a TOS ROM though.



Let WinSTon and Steem take you back to the ST's lovely green desktop!

Relive the delights of Robocod using the excellent WinUAE Amiga emulator

The ST was eventually overshadowed by the very popular Commodore Amiga. Despite it's prevalence, there are very few Amiga emulators available. By far the most popular is WinUAE (Universal Amiga Emulator) which, as the title suggests, emulates every home model from the A500 to the A1200. It can be quite confusing to use it first – you have to configure the program correctly and point it to both the Amiga Kikstart ROM and program ROM before emulation – but it does offer authentic emulation and runs all programs tested. At the very least WinUAE requires a P200 to run. If your machine can't cut the mustard, we recommend WinFellow – an excellent, if slightly simplistic alternative for users with less-powerful PCs.

I couldn't move on to consoles without briefly mentioning the Acorn range of computers. A number of emulators cater for the BBC Micro, although we recommend BeebEm (Windows) and B-EM (DOS) above the others as they are the most advanced. Electron emulation is taken care of with ElectrEm (which is great despite a dodgy GUI), while for the Archimedes you can choose from either Archie or Red Squirrel. The latter is classed as alpha software and we experienced problems running some games. Archie, on the other hand, ran all software tested. However, the RISC OS ROMs are required to run both emulators.

GBA emulation

When a new console is released, programmers fall over themselves to be the first to emulate it. In the case of the GameBoy Advance, emulators began to surface before the handheld was even released! Much to Nintendo's chagrin, it seems that resourceful writers got their hands on development kits and began to see what was making the machine tick.

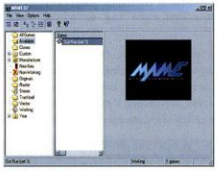
While the some of these emulators only run home-made demos, several will actually run the latest commercial games. Boycott Advance is one example that originally had problems emulating some 3D games but with the latest release runs all games without a hitch or a graphical glitch. Better still is the excellent VisualBoyAdvance which allows you to use cheats and save your progress. It also emulates the Pocket, Super and Color GameBoys, making it the definite GameBoy emulator.

Emulating handheld games may seem nonsensical, especially as the whole point of the GBA is that you can play it while one the move (or, more appropriately, while sitting on the toilet). But at least you can preview games before you go out and buy them.

Squint at a small screen no longer – run GBA games on your PC!

Arcade at home

MAME can emulate a stunning range of arcade systems, giving you access to a massive back catalogue of games



So far we've looked at home computers and consoles, but emulation doesn't have to stop in the home. Several older arcade machine boards are the focus of a few emulators out there and the need to track down that old arcade favourite and pump it full of 10p pieces is no longer necessary.

When it comes to emulating arcade games many people turn to MAME, the Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator. This is a multiple-format emulator that can replicate a large range of arcade boards from a variety of manufacturers. The easy-to-use Windows port, MAME32, includes support for over 3,000 arcade games, and the number is growing with each new release. Besides MAME there are other arcade emulators of worth. RAINE, in particular, is recommended as it features one of the friendliest interfaces of any emulator and supports hundreds of popular arcade games. If you can't get a game working with MAME then try RAINE. If you're a fan of fighting games then don't miss Callus. This Capcom arcade system emulator lets you play all of the major Capcom titles, including the Street Fighter II series and its many spin-off games.

It seems the only old arcade games that neither of these programs can emulate are the classic laserdisc titles, such as Dragon's Lair and Space Ace. You can, however, use DAPHNE to achieve this aim, providing you have a supported laserdisc player and the original game laserdisc. As that's something of a tall order, it's also possible grab the games from the Web as MPEGs (they're pretty large mind) and play them using your PC.

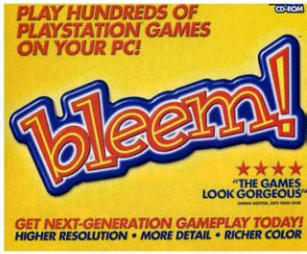
Emulating consoles

If there was one single program which drew attention to the emulation scene it would have to be UltraHLE (High Level Emulator). This tiny, freeware program was the first playable Nintendo 64 console emulator and it caused a storm, mainly because the machine it emulated was retailing for £200 at the time! Legal threats were issued and development of the program was immediately discontinued. The original release still stands up well with the glut of N64 emulators which have appeared since, although it will not play some of the more recent games. One active N64 emulator which expands its compatibility list with each new release is Nemu64. Most games run smoothly even when in full-screen mode, but success generally depends on your system setup and the graphics card you are using. With N64 emulation, if one program doesn't work for you just try another from either Blade64, Project64 or 1964.

The N64 may have been superseded by the GameCube, but you can relive some of its finest games on your PC

The popularity of the Sony PlayStation has also led to several emulators of debatable legality. At the top of the pile, in terms of infamy at least, are bleem! and Virtual Game Station – two commercial emulators which have been hindered by legal threats and lawsuits. In fact, all assets relating to Virtual Game Station have since been acquired by Sony and development has ended with version 1.4. It still runs the vast majority of PlayStation games straight from the CD, although it renders the visuals in software using DirectDraw capabilities. bleem!, on the other hand, supports Direct 3D compatible graphics cards and actually enhances the visuals. Both programs play original games, backup copies and imports – just pop the disc in the drive and the game will load. In the demo version of bleem! sound is disabled and you cannot save your progress while playing games. Note that due to copyright issues, we are unable to include these emulators on the coverdisc.

If you're looking for a free alternative, then ePSXe and FPSE are the best of the bunch (once you've taken time to configure them correctly). A PlayStation BIOS ROM is required to run both emulators however, so you'll need to scour the shadier side of the Web before beginning.

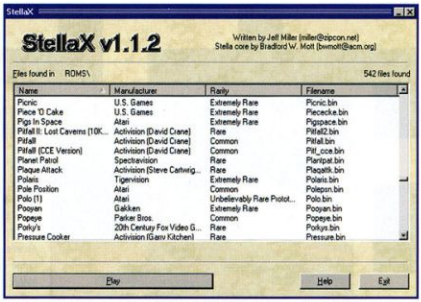


Strangely, bleem! even went on sale as a boxed product for a short time before its untimely demise

Games galore

If anything, console emulation is more popular than computer emulation and just about every gaming platform has been emulated. The classic Atari 2600 is no exception and there are several excellent emulators available. StellaX is certainly the most popular, mainly because it runs all 2600 cartridge games and the rarer Supercharger cassette games. The only downside is that you can't configure your own keyboard controls, although you can use a PC joystick to play the games.

Atari has always commanded a cult following and all of their subsequent machines have been emulated, including the unsuccessful 5200 SuperSystem and 7800 ProSystem models. If you wish to emulate these machines, then Daniel Boris is your man because he's written emulators for both! Virtual Super System and v7800 are somewhat basic and run in DOS, but beggars can't be choosers. Everything is run and configured from the command line so be prepared to fiddle around with various options before getting any results. ROM files are also required. If the thought of using a DOS-based program makes you turn green, try out Jum52, an excellent new emulator that runs under the relative safety of Windows. Like Virtual Super System, a 5200 BIOS ROM is required. Similarly, you'll need an appropriate ROM file to run Handy – the Atari Lynx emulator. The final Atari console, the psuedo-64-bit Jaguar, is proving difficult to emulate. Several promising projects are afoot and furthest down the development line is Project Tempest – the first Jaguar emulator to actually run commercial games. At present, only some games include support for sound, and a fairly fast PC is required to run games at a steady frame rate.



A great feature of this emulator is the rarity display. This shows how rare the original cart currently is

Besides Sony and Nintendo, Atari's other rival in the console market was Sega. Programming teams are struggling to emulate the two most recent Sega consoles, the Saturn and the Dreamcast, but the earlier machines are well represented in the emulation scene. In particular, there are many Megadrive emulators available to download and lots of debate over which is the best one. If you're looking to play

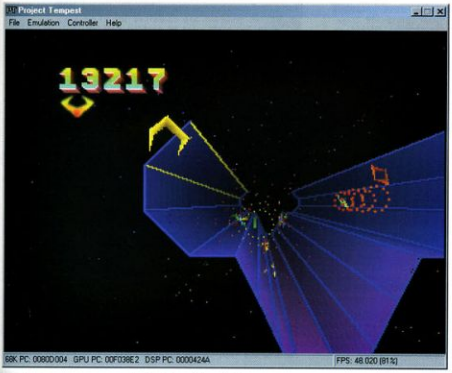
The various Megadrive emulators throw open the door to 100s of classic games

Sharing your wares

While using emulators is not illegal, downloading the games to play on them is. You see, someone owns the copyright to just about every game ever released. Unless you own an original copy of the game or the copyright holder has declared that the game can be freely distributed, it is technically theft to download it for free. And don't be fooled by the disclaimers on Web sites that claim that it's OK to download games as long as you delete them after 24 hours. No such law has ever been introduced.

This includes old games too, because even if the original publisher no longer exists as a company, you'll often find that the rights fall to the original programmer. If the publisher has been bought out by another company, the rights will belong to them, lock, stock and back catalogue.

Shades of grey do creep in when considering old games however. To be found guilty of copyright theft it must be proved that downloading games is done at the expense of the copyright holder. So while this would obviously cover downloading PlayStation and GameBoy Advance games from dodgy Web sites, it can't be realistically levelled against those who download old Spectrum and Commodore games. After all, these games have not been commercially available for between 10 and 20 years! We do not condone piracy in anyway whatsoever, but it's a matter of fact that no one has ever been prosecuted for downloading and playing old games.



Finally you can emulate the Atari Jaguar, the world's first 64-bit console, on your PC

standard Megadrive games, we recommend Kgen as Sega itself is using the program to re-release some of its older titles. However, to emulate the Mega-CD and the 32X add-ons use Gens and Retrodrive respectively. Moving back in time further, you can emulate both the original Sega Master System and the handheld Sega Game Gear using either ChaSMS or FreezeSMS. The latter now includes additional support for the Colcovision console.

The Master System's main competitor was the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and there are literally dozens of emulators available for this, with new ones surfacing regularly. The NES had a strange system of mappers that determined how the game ROMs were accessed and each one has to be coded separately when writing an emulator, so the more mappers, the higher the compatibility rate. At present, fwNES supports the most mappers, with RockNES running a close second. However, many argue that Nesticle, the first ever NES emulator, is still the best as it supports all sound channels, allows you to save your game and will run full speed on low-end systems. When it comes to emulating the Super Nintendo system, you are generally limited to either SNES9x or ZSNES. Both programs offer fast, faithful emulation and actually expand upon the original machine by allowing you to play multiplayer games over the Internet!

Enjoy an online game of Super Bomberman using SNES9x or ZSNES

To be continued...

In this introductory feature I've looked at emulators designed to run on a home PC. In issue two of Retro Gamer, I'll take a closer look at other host machines, including the GamePark 32, Xbox and PlayStation 2. That's right – you can run classic games on the very latest consoles!

retro gamer coverdisc

The Retro Gamer coverdisc contains over 200 PC retro games, making it the biggest and best retro collection available! Plus, we've also crammed on 75 top emulators, so you can relive unforgettable gaming moments on dozens of classic computers and consoles

step 1 Put a coverdisc into your CD/DVD-ROM drive and it will start automatically. If not, browse the disc for the browser.exe program and double-click it. Click on one of the tabs to choose the category, then click on the program's button on the left to start the installation.

step 2 Some programs are contained in .zip files, so you might need an archive manager like WinZip, which is under the Misc browser tab. Extract all the programs from the .zip file using the Extract feature, then look for and run the file marked Setup.exe or Install.exe.

step 3 Some programs run straight from the disc. In this case, you should look for the program's main .exe file. Some programs are included on the disc as .exe files that don't install – they'll run straight from the disc. If you see an error, copy the .exe from the CD to your hard disk.

step 4 If you have a particular type of game in mind, click the Search button. If you're looking for Space Invader games, type 'Invader' into the box and remove the tick in the Find Whole Word Only box. To search for a particular game or emulator, tick the box and type in the program title.

Problem solving

If you're having a problem with a particular program on our coverdisc, please view the help file in the program for assistance. You might also consider visiting the website of the program author for further help. If this fails, please email: **techsupport@livepublishing.co.uk**.

If you are having problems with the CD, first check that it is not dirty or scratched. CDs can be cleaned by holding them under the cold water tap and gently rubbing the silver side with a tissue. Dry it carefully with another tissue.

If the disc still doesn't work, then it may be faulty. Faulty discs should be returned to Retro Gamer, Live Publishing International Ltd, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, Cheshire, UK, SK10 4NP. We will replace all genuinely faulty discs.

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Helpline for coverdisc problems only

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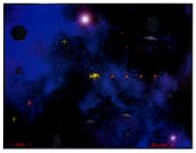
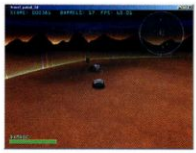



Adventure games

Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
6 Day Assassin	6DAwin.zip	Point-and-click	423Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Put your wits to the test against a deadly sniper
Adventure	adv551.zip	Text adventure	119Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A pure text adventure
Ancient Domains of Mystery	adom111.zip	RPG	1,108Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Guide your mutating hero through dungeons
Arrival (Attack of the B-Movie Cliches)	arrwin.zip	Text adventure	1,228Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Stop the evil aliens from invading Earth
Avalon	AVALON.zip	RPG	1,410Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Explore an alien world in this top-down RPG
Bert The Newsreader	Bert.zip	Point-and-click	679Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Help Bert take revenge on the boss that sacked him
Betrayal at Krondor	Krondor.zip	RPG	10,268Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Previously full-priced adventure game released by Sierra
Beyond the Titanic	titanic.zip	Text adventure	94Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Wander around and perform tasks aboard the ocean liner
Colditz Escape	colditz.zip	Text adventure	1,650Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Escape from the castle fortress
Crack of Doom	crackdoom.zip	Text adventure	94Kb	DOS	Freeware	The concluding chapter to the Lord of the Rings trilogy
Dark Ages	darkages.zip	RPG	383Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fun top-down Role Playing Game for Windows
Dark Woods 2	Dwoods2.zip	Text adventure	76Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A simple adventure/puzzle game for Windows
Forever Legend	438_ftoo.zip	RPG	380Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An RPG influenced by the Final Fantasy games
Furcadia	furcsetup020.exe	Online RPG	4,431Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Online-only RPG adventure with many sub-quests and games
Gaea Fallen	Gaea_Fallen.zip	Pre-rendered RPG	8,973Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Save the world of Gaea by solving puzzles
Heist	Heist.zip	Text adventure	237Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Become lost in this engrossing text adventure game
Hero	HERO.ZIP	RPG	361Kb	9x/NT/2000	Freeware	Sword and sorcery action set in enemy-packed dungeons
Illusions of Deception	illusion.zip	RPG	841Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Reunite four friends after a meteor shower hits Earth
J.D. Spy	spy1_0.zip	Spy adventure	6,001Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An intriguing spy-themed adventure
Little Johnny Evil	LJE1.zip	Point-and-click	820Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Help Johnny escape from the cellar in this Point-and-click
Lord of the Rings Game One	lord.zip	Text adventure	176Kb	DOS	Freeware	Guide Frodo and friends across Middle-Earth
Lost Hero	losthero-v0.9.9.8.zip	RPG	3,759Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Explore a mythical land in this involving Role Playing Game
Lunatix: The Insanity Circle	lunticc11.zip	Point-and-click	809Kb	9x	Freeware	Solve puzzles to help the doctor escape his own asylum
Magebane 2 - Trinity 1.1	Magebane2v11.exe	3D RPG	8,839Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Guide three monks on a quest for the holy Amulet of Yendor
Out of Order	OOO_full.exe	Point-and-click	8,790Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Comical point-and-click puzzler
Rob Blanc I	rb.zip	Point-and-click	533Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Point and click adventure set in a chip shop
Rob Blanc II	rb2.zip	Point-and-click	675Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Rob Blanc continues his point-and-click-adventures
Rob Blanc III	rb3.zip	Point-and-click	854Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Help Rob save the space-time continuum from unravelling
Rogue	313_rogue.zip	RPG	40Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	PC version of the 1986 Rogue game
Shadows of Mordor	shadows.zip	Text adventure	94Kb	DOS	Freeware	The second part of Melbourne House's trilogy
Shield of Destiny	shield.zip	Text adventure	1,196Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Rescue a princess in your quest for a magical shield
Smuggler	smuggler.zip	Text adventure	2,170Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Save the earth in this 18th century smuggling quest
Three Weeks in Paradise	3weeks_1.5_16bit_setup.exe	Graphic adventure	18,088Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A colourful remake of the classic Spectrum adventure
Zork 1	Zork1.exe	Text adventure	167Kb	DOS	Freeware	Perhaps the best know text adventure ever
Zork 2	Zork2.exe	Text adventure	171Kb	DOS	Freeware	The second of the Zork adventure games
Zork 3	Zork3.exe	Text adventure	164Kb	DOS	Freeware	The third Zork game, subtitled The Dungeon Master
Zork: The Undiscovered Underground	ZTUUWin.zip	Text adventure	318Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A new Zork text adventure

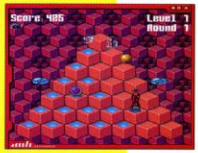
Arcade games

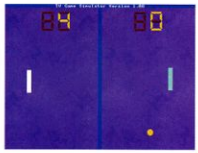
Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
3D Bomber	3dbomber.zip	FPS	207Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A three dimensional maze game with online support
3D Breakout	1208_nehe_3dbreakout.zip	Breakout clone	1,523Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Battle through 15 levels of top quality Breakout action
3d Spryjink	692_spryzip.exe	Platform game	911Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A combination of Q-Bert and an Atari game called Quick Step
3-Demon	1129_3demon.zip	Pacman clone	23Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An early clone of Pac-man that will pass the time
Abuse	Abuse Setup.exe	Platform game	2,903Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The classic platform game remade for the PC
Ackman	ackman.zip	Pacman clone	60Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Another remake of the mighty Pac-man. For older PCs
Afro-Santa	mobileref.zip	Arcade game	4,880Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Deliver presents as you walk around this 3D world
Airlift Rescue	130_rescue.zip	Arcade remake	132Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Remake of the classic Chopper Lift game from the 80s
Alex the Allegator 4	alex4_install.exe	Platform game	1,135Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A platform game that's so old skool it's monochrome!
Ankazis 2020: The Sun	az2020.zip	Arcade game	5,207Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Hover over scorched terrain in this 3D arcade game
Asteroids PC	asteroids.zip	Space shooter	1,210Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The timeless original updated with colourful new graphics
Attack of the Mutant Camels	714_amc.zip	Arcade remake	1,365Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Based of Jeff Minter's classic camel killing game!
Azteroids3D	289_a3d.zip	Space shooter	438Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A superb 3D remake of asteroids on PC
Bananarama	bananarama.zip	Platform game	891Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An intriguing cross between Bomberman and Lode Runner
Barrel Patrol 2D	barrel_patrol_2d.zip	Tank battle game	96Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Protect the precious oil supply from the enemy tanks
Barrel Patrol 3D	barrel_patrol_3d.0.90.win.zip	Tank battle game	1,020Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	3D version of the above game with much better graphics
Beat Balls	BeatBalls52.zip	Breakout	32,848Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The bat 'n' ball action of Break Out returns to your PC

BII-NARY	biinary.zip	Platform game	482Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Find and destroy a malicious computer virus
Boulder Dash	246_bdash.zip	Platform game	46Kb	DOS	Freeware	A remake of the classic Boulder Dash arcade game
Bugz 4	Bugz4.exe	Space shooter	1,129Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A space shooter in which you battle flying insects
Cac-man	cacman.zip	Pacman clone	1,300Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An above average Pac-man clone for Windows
Cash Invaders	invader.zip	Space shooter	388Kb	DOS	Freeware	Earn money by blasting aliens
Chub Gam 3D	chubdc.ZIP	FPS	4,953Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fun First Person Shooter
Chuckie Egg	148_chuckie.exe	Arcade remake	227Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The classic game of Chuckie Egg, updated to run on the PC
Code Red: Battle for Earth	codered1_1.exe	FPS	97,411Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A superb First Person Shooter based on the Quake II engine
Corridors of Power	power100.exe	FPS	8,171Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	First person action at it's finest
Cosgrove's Air Escape	download_cae.zip	Platform game	811Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Jump from platform to platform in a bid for freedom
Critters 2	c2.zip	Platform game	3,428Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Combined puzzle/platform game
Deep Space	770_deepspace.zip	Arcade remake	1,775Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Based on the late, great Missile Command
Defender PC	defender.zip	Space shooter	1,196Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The classic arcade game returns in an updated PC version
Digger	windig.zip	Platform game	74Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An faithfully updated version of the classic game
Dispersion	dp1.exe	Space shooter	1,568Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Similar to Asteroids, with a variety of enemies to shoot
Dragon Castle	DragonCastle.exe	FPS	3,499Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Save your homeland from total destruction
DX-Boulderdash	DXBoulderV042.zip	Maze game	798Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An updated version of Boulder Dash with great graphics
Galactic Battle	galacticbattle.zip	Space shooter	40Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Another remake, this time of a game released in 1991
Galactix	1380_galactix.zip	Space shooter	691Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Defeat the enemy fleet with your spaceship
Galaxian PC	galaxian.zip	Space shooter	1,374Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Take on the evil alien forces in this faithful update
G-Fighter	gfighter.zip	Space shooter	389Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Blast the alien scum in this space-based shooter
Giana Family	giana122.zip	Platform game	1,730Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fun game with loads of power-ups to collect
Gltron	gltron-0.70-win32.exe	Light-cycle game	3,574Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race deadly light-cycles in this stunning multiplayer game
Hungry Horace PC	hungry_horace_pc.zip	Maze game	701Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	It's Hungry Horace, thrust into the 21st century!
Hyperoid	Hyperoid95.zip	Space shooter	75Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A remake of the classic Asteroids game with a few differences
Icy Tower	icytower_install.exe	Platform game	3,309Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The water level's rising so you need to escape!
Invader!	749_invader_install.exe	Space shooter	492Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Blast the alien race in this Space Invaders clone
Invaders 1978	inv78-02.zip	Space shooter	48Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A faithful remake of the classic arcade game
InvadeX	InvadeX.zip	Space shooter	154Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Another worthy remake of the classic Space Invaders game
Jazz Jackrabbit	jjxmas95.zip	Platform game	1,407Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The Christmas edition of Jazz Jack Rabbit
Ken's Labyrinth	labfull.zip	Arcade game	867Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A remake of an old DOS game originally released in 1993
Kingsborn	888_kingsborn1_103.zip	FPS	8,699Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A great FPS game that has many levels and tons of options
Kops	SetupKOPS10.exe	Arcade game	3,317Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Control a small space ship in a battle against other players
LaserAge Gold	laserage_gold_20a.exe	Space shooter	5,600Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Another space-based shoot-em-up
Mutant Xpiders	mutant_xpiders.zip	Space shooter	175Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Blast the ugly spiders in this update of an old BBC game
Nukem	818_nukem.zip	Arcade remake	38Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Remake of the venerable Missile Command game
Paintball Party	ppwin.exe	Platform game	3,736Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A clone of Duke Nukem with the added fun of paintball
Plastic Kitten	PlastickKitten.exe	Platform game	853Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A brilliant, colourful update of Q-Bert. Give it a go!
Pong	Pong.exe	Bat and ball game	48Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A very faithful update of Pong
Pumpy	pumpy.exe	Arcade game	4,509Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Save the pumpkin from being eaten!
Scramble PC	scramble.zip	Space shooter	1,462Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A remake of the classic shooting game
Shaolin Soilder	799_ssoldier.zip	Platform game	1,267Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A funny, high quality platform game for your PC
Shooter	shooterMSI.zip	FPS	3,018Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Rack up as many kills as possible
Snack	SnackSetup.exe	Worm clone	594Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Guide the snake to the food in this fun update
Solar Striker	SolarStriker.zip	Space shooter	65Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A remake of a classic GameBoy shoot-em-up
Space Invaders PC	vaders.zip	Space shooter	988Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A brilliant Space Invaders clone with great graphics
Spear Resurrection	Spearres.zip	FPS	1,710Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	This fast-paced FPS is based on the classic Wolfenstein
StarBlaster	starblaster.exe	Space shooter	140Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A strictly old-skool shoot-em-up game for Windows
Sure Shot	sureshot.zip	Shooting game	2,368Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Wipe out the enemy forces in this innovative shooting game
Top Hat Willy	thwpc10.zip	Platform game	434Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	One of many Jet Set Willy remakes written for the PC
Waterslide Island	waterslide_island.zip	Race game	7,963Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Collect the bubbles as you rocket down waterslides!

Card games

Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
123 Puzzle Card Games	123puzzl.exe	Card game	1,690Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Pass the time with this collection of solitaire card games
All Cards	284_allcards.zip	Solitaire game	74Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A remake of solitaire with a few more options
Cribbage Solitaire	918_cribsol.zip	Solitaire game	99Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Play cribbage against the computer with this program
Double Solitaire	270_double_s.exe	Solitaire game	1,657Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Plays like the traditional game of solitaire
Freecell Collection	FreecellCol.exe	Card game	3,467Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A collection of freecell card games
Kings Corner	408_kc-v12.zip	Solitaire game	768Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A coffee-break solitaire game for Windows





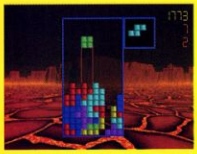
Klondike Collection	KlondikeCol.exe	Card game	3,608Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A pack full of high quality klondike games
Spider Collection	SpiderCol.exe	Card game	3,740Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A collection of spider card games

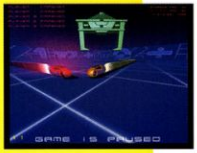
Puzzle games

Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
15	fifteen.exe	Tile-sliding puzzle	378Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Slide the tiles around until they're in numerical order
2 Squard	2squar11.zip	Puzzle game	681Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The aim is simple. Just clear the board
3D Connect Four	3dconnectfour.exe	Puzzle game	1,719Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A classic remake of Connect Four
Alizarin Tetris	atris-1.0.5-win32.zip	Tetris clone	644Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Just like the original Tetris game, but with new options
Ants: The Exodus	Ants.zip	Maze game	344Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Clear a path for the female ants to avoid enemies
Atomic Tetris	220_atomtet.zip	Tetris clone	45Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	It's Tetris with support for two players
B-Jigsaw	bjig32.zip	Jigsaw puzzle	1,753Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fun jigsaw puzzle game for Windows
Blockout!	136_blockout.zip	Tetris clone	27Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The classic game of Tetris reinvented with 3D graphics
Blow Up	blowupsetup.exe	Puzzle game	1,003Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	Clear the colour balls from the screen
Bubble Bomb	BubbleBomb_1_6_Demo.exe	Puzzle game	2,218Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A puzzle game in the spirit of Bubblet
ConnectOrb	ConnectOrb_12.exe	Puzzle game	240Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	Connect the orbs in this challenging puzzle game
Crazy Tetris	crazytet.zip	Tetris clone	392Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The classic Tetris game with a number of new additions
Crypto!	crypto.zip	Puzzle game	340Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A word puzzle game for Windows
Crystal Stacker	cswin.zip	Tetris clone	861Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A great Tetris/Columns clone to keep you entertained
Cue Words	cuesetup.exe	Word game	800Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Guess the hidden words against the clock
Deadly Rooms Of Death	cdrod1_55etup.exe	Maze game	12,754Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Figure out which doors to open while battling cockroaches!
Deli Dash	dd.zip	Puzzle game	7,800Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A puzzle game that mixes together several old favourites
Eyes	eyes_stp_20.zip	Piece matching game	2,668Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Rotate the eyeballs to match rows of three or more
GemDrop	gemdrop.zip	Puzzle game	1,521Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	For those of you who can never have enough Tetris games
GermNation	germnation.zip	Colour matching game	536Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Move the objects in the playfield and match up their colours
Hangman	392_hangm102.zip	Word game	546Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Guess the word with as few guesses as possible
HexPus	Hexpuse.zip	Tetris clone	37Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Slot the polygonal blocks together to score points
Image Hunter	imagehunter1.zip	Picture game	253Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Turn over two cards at a time to find the matching pairs
Jigsaw	1553_jigsaw.zip	Jigsaw puzzle	40Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Import any picture and make a jigsaw from it
Jumble	jum_ins132.exe	Word game	448Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Choose the correct letters to complete phrases or song titles
Merlin '99	Merlin99.zip	Puzzle compendium	2,152Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A collection of challenging games, all of them classics
Mortar Mayhem	mortar10.zip	Tanks clone	280Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Choose the trajectory and power of your mortar fire
Puzzle Champion	puzzle.exe	Puzzle game	3,433Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A flexible puzzle game for one to four players
Q-Bix	qbix.zip	Virtual Rubik's Cube	1,134Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A Rubik's Cube game with variable size and difficulty
Rock Solid	rock_solid.exe	Maze game	1,634Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Navigate through a maze of shifting walls to reach your goal
Shipbombers95	53_bombers95.zip	Strategy game	49Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Work out the location of your enemy's fleet
The Memory Machine	memory10.exe	Memory game	3,276Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Save Rob-Robot from destruction by copying the sequences
The Square Game	tsg.exe	Maze game	1,363Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Step on all the blocks to make them disappear
Tilerama	Tilerama14.zip	Tile-sliding puzzle	3,919Kb	9x/Me	Freeware	Rearrange the sliding tiles to form a picture.
TitOT	TitOT.zip	Connect 4 clone	1,613Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Form a row of four coloured disks to win
Tokkobot DX	TokkobotDX.exe	Construction puzzle	10,215Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Use your limited blocks to construct a bridge
Trackwords	Trkwd122.zip	Word game	301Kb	9x/NT	Freeware	A Boggle-style word game with a customisable board
WAmp Sapper	wssetup.exe	Puzzle game	419Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A new version of the popular puzzle game

Simulation games

Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
3D First Person Maze	3DMazeSetup.exe	Maze game	817Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A maze game viewed from a first-person perspective
3D Race	511_3drace.zip	Racing game	1,078Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A racing game with support for several players
Aral Superplus	superplus.exe	Racing game	691Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race against a number of computer-controlled cars
Billabong Racers	BBRACERS.zip	Racing game	120Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A neat racing game with loads of funny extras
Crazy Cows	cows.zip	Strategy game	1,100Kb	DOS	Freeware	It's a turned based strategy game - with cows
Creative Racing	CRInstall.exe	Racing game	4,852Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fast arcade racing game, displayed in full 3D
Eagle Lander 3D	setup114.exe	Space simulator	10,734Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Simulate the flight of the lunar lander
Fast Laps 98	601_fl98.zip	Driving game	1,678Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Features fifteen levels of racing fun
Fish Farm	FishFarm.exe	Business simulation	1,224Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Organise the running of a fish farm!
Freeciv	freeciv-1.14.0-win32.zip	Strategy game	3,886Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A detailed clone of the amazing Civilization
FunHouse of Terror	fhouse2.exe	Simulation game	1,279Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Create your own spooky halloween carnival
Go Karts	gokarts.exe	Racing game	501Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race go-karts around the track at high speed
Lord Monarch	ds7e.zip	Strategy game	1,050Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Build up a powerful kingdom in this strategy simulation





Magic Conquest	magicconquest.exe	Strategy game	1,308Kb	9x/ME/NT/2000	Freeware	Command armies in this involving strategy game
Mann-Filter Rallye	MANN-FILTER-Rallye.exe	Driving game	2,484Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race on a dirt track in this speedy racing game
Mother of all Battles	MotherOfAllBattlesSetup.exe	War simulation	536Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Take over the world in this fun strategy game for Windows
NekoFlight	nkflt09.exe	Strategy game	569Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A Japanese flight sim game in glorious 3D
Pocket War	pocketwar.exe	War simulation	696Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A strategy war simulation for Windows
R Racing	R_142e.zip	Racing game	6,561Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A realistic 3D racing game
Rally Cross	rallycross.exe	Racing game	1,422Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race against the clock around your own circuits
Rapid Aerial Deployment	rad.exe	RTS	6,589Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An air based Real Time Strategy game
RunOut	RunOutInstall.exe	Racing game	3,400Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Rag your car along the open roads
Scrambles 1	scrambles.exe	Racing game	7,491Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	A fun dirt-bike racing game for Windows
Sk8Park	sk8park.zip	Strategy game	1,921Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A top-down skate park building game
Slay	SlaySetup.exe	Strategy game	444Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An easy to learn strategy game set in medieval times
Tank	Tank.exe	Simulation game	2,257Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Experience over 60 levels of fun in this tank game
The General	gen45een.zip	War simulation	1,348Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Control various sections of your military with this game
VlakoSim	vlakosim.exe	Business simulation	1,132Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Simulate the running of a rail network

Sports games

Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
10th Frame Bowling	bowling.zip	Bowling game	47Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A 3D bowling game for Windows
Blobby Volley	blobby.zip	Ball game	749Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Play as a blob and hit the ball over the net
BrasFoot	bf2003.exe	Football game	1,915Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Take control of a football club in this management game
Cannon Smash	csmasho64a.exe	Ball game	4,806Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A sport simulation game with cool 3D graphics
Carom 3D	caromV219.exe	Ball game	14,214Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A superb pool game for Windows
Catch and Throw	cat.lzh	Ball game	1,029Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Catch and throw a ball in this sports game
Concrete Bowling	cbwing20.exe	Bowling game	3,641Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A bowling game for your computer with many options
Cosmic Pool	CPinstall_v1_1.exe	Pool game	1,016Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	It's a game of pool, except that it takes place in space
Crazy Golf	crazygolf.exe	Golf game	1,180Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A nine hole crazy golf game for one to four players
Darts	godarts.exe	Darts game	653Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Good old fashioned fun with darts
Federation Wrestling	federationwrestling.exe	Wrestling game	14,965Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Create your own wrestler and guide them through the ranks
FootballDotManager	FDMSmallClient156.exe	Football game	3,412Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An online football management game
Freeride Earth	freeride_v3.zip	Snowboarding game	1,565Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Slide down the slopes in this great-looking game
HoboSoccer	hobo12.zip	Football game	883Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A desktop football game for one or two players
iSnooker	isnk.exe	Snooker simulation	917Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An online multiplayer snooker game
Ludo Race	ludorace3d.exe	Futuristic race game	951Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race around the track at high speeds in this racing game
Mini Golf	minigolf.zip	Golf game	827Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A 10 hole mini golf game that you can play on your desktop
Mini Ice Hockey	hockey.exe	Hockey game	340Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A mini hockey game with support for one or two players
Sharpshooters Miniature Golf	smg_free.exe	Golf game	2,547Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A 3D miniature golf game for up to four players
SteepleChase	steeplechase.exe	Racing game	985Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Race to win in this horse racing game
Super Hockey	superhockey.zip	Hockey game	557Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A simple hockey game for Windows
Tactical Soccer	TSoccerDemo.zip	Football game	7,255Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An exciting turn based football game
Title Bout Boxing Quiz	tqisetup.exe	Boxing trivia game	22,182Kb	Windows (all)	Shareware	Test out your knowledge of the boxing world
Track Meet	trackmeet.exe	Athletics game	2,475Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Compete in six events in this athletics game
Tux Racer	tuxracer-win32-0.61a.zip	Snowboarding game	7,822Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Slide Tux the penguin down a mountain on his belly!
UniBall	uniballsetup.exe	Ball game	1,109Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	This hockey-like game included support for online play

Emulators

Utility Name	File Name	File Type	File Size	System	Type	Description
1964	1964_085.exe	N64 emulator	930Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An Nintendo 64 emulator with support for commercial games
Ace32	ace32.zip	Jupiter ACE emulator	46Kb	DOS	Freeware	Emulate the Jupiter ACE on your PC
AqEmu	AqEmu.zip	Mattel Aquarius emulator		37Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware The one and only Mattel Aquarius emulator
Archie	archie9.zip	Archimedes emulator	131Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An excellent Archimedes emulator. RISC OS ROMs required
Arnold	arnold27012002.zip	Amstrad CPC emulator	426Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Run the entire CPC range with this fully-featured emulator
Artifex	Artifex029.zip	C16/plus4 emulator	465Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	One of the newer C16/plus4 emulators
Atari800win	Atari800WinPLus40Beta.zip	Atari 800 emulator	491Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the Atari 800 and other Atari 8-bit models
BeebEm	beebem14.exe	BBC Micro emulator	152Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The best BBC Micro emulator available.
B-EM	b-em06w.zip	BBC Micro emulator	469Kb	DOS	Freeware	A fast, DOS-based BBC Model A/B emulator
Blade64	Blade64_WIP5.zip	N64 emulator	285Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An N64 emulator that supports lots of commercial games
BlueMSX	blueMSXv105.exe	MSX emulator	1,185Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Get the MSX console up and running on your PC
Boycott Advance	ba-028.zip	GBA emulator	636Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A very good GameBoy Advance emulator for your PC

Callus	clso42w.zip	Arcade emulator	199Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the CPS1 machines so you can play Capcom classics
CaPriCe32	cap32_352.exe	Amstrad CPC emulator	295Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Another Amstrad CPC emulator to add to your collection
CD-ICE	CD-ice.zip	CDi emulator	168Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The only CDi emulator available
ChaSMS	chasms030.zip	Sega emulator	190Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Run the Master System and Game Gear on your PC
DAPHNE	daphne-0.99.4.zip	Laserdisc emulator	1,491Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate laserdisc games on your PC
DVE	dve20.exe	Vectrex emulator	3,090Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Play vector-based games with this unique emulator
ElectrEm	ElectrEm_b9b_Windows.zip	Electron emulator	352Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the Acorn Electron on your Windows system
Elkulator	elko3w.zip	Acorn emulator	458Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A faithful Acorn emulator that is regularly updated
ePSXe	epsxe160.zip	PlayStation emulator	280Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The best free PlayStation emulator. ROM files required
Euphoric	euphoric.zip	Oric emulator	1,156Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the Oric-1, the Atmos and the Telestrat
EX68	ex68v215.zip	x68000	582Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the rare Japanese console on your Windows PC
FPSE	FPSE_009bin.zip	PlayStation emulator	438Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Another free PlayStation emulator. ROM files required
FreeDO	freedop14.zip	3DO emulator	159Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The one and only 3DO emulator. It's 99% complete
FreezeSMS	freezesmsv46.exe	Sega emulator	1,038Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A multi-format emulator
Frodo	frodov41.zip	C64 emulator	386Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A dedicated C64 emulator. Compatible with lots of games
Fusion PC	fusion.zip	Mac emulator	1,925Kb	DOS	Freeware	An early Apple Mac emulator for systems running DOS
fwNES	fwnes0302.zip	NES emulator	867Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Supports more mappers than any other NES emulator
Gemulator 2000	gem2000.zip	Mac Plus emulator	164Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Mac Plus emulator than also supports the Atari ST!
Gens	wgens211.zip	Megadrive emulator	381Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Perhaps the best Megadrive emulator available
Handy	handy090.zip	Atari Lynx emulator	595Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The one and only Lynx emulator. ROM file required
Hu6280	jak_189.zip	PC Engine emulator	94Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The only free PC Engine emulator available for Windows
Intv	intvwin.zip	Intellivision emulator	1,539Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fast, easy to use Intellivision emulator
Jagulator	jagulator-151-win9x.zip	Atari Jaguar emulator	184Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The first available Jaguar emulator
JOYCE	joyce202.zip	PCW emulator	4,122Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the Amstrad PCW word processor on your PC
Jum52	jum52_Win60.zip	Atari 5200 emulator	358Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The only Windows-based Atari 5200 emulator
Kgen	kgeng804.zip	Megadrive emulator	313Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An early Megadrive emulator that faithfully runs many games
Koleko	koleko_vos.zip	ColecoVision emulator	625Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fast, new ColecoVision emulator for your Windows PC
Mame	mame32v76b.zip	Arcade emulator	5,188Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The original, and best, arcade emulator
Meka	mekaw065c.zip	Sega emulator	553Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Considered to be the best Master System/Game Gear
Minus4w	minus4w.zip	C16/plus4 emulator	210Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A very good C16/plus4 emulator
Nemu64	nemu08.zip	N64 emulator	4,740Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The best N64 emulator available. This is the final version
Nesticle	nesticlexxx.zip	NES emulator	192Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The first ever NES emulator. There are better alternatives now
NO$ZX81	nozx-4f.zip	ZX80/81 emulator	121Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Windows-based ZX80/81 emulator for Windows
Nostalgia	nostalgia.zip	Intellivision emulator	712Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Run Intellivision games on your Windows PC
ParaMSX	paraMSX042.zip	MSX emulator	943Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Excellent MSX emulator that supports many different models
Project Tempest	PT v0.5.zip	Atari Jaguar emulator	226Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The first Jaguar emulator to play commercial games
Project64	pj64_1_4.exe	N64 emulator	887Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An excellent N64 emulator compatible with many games
QLAY	qlaywo90.zip	Sinclair QL emulator	188Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A fully-featured Sinclair QL emulator for Windows PCs
Raine	rainew-0.38.0.zip	Arcade emulator	1,636Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A recommended alternative to MAME
RealSpectrum	realspectrum.zip	Spectrum emulator	2,386Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An excellent Spectrum emulatordifferent processor types
Red Squirrel	RedSquirrel0.6.zip	Archimedes emulator	258Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A strange name, but an excellent Acorn Archimedes emulator
Retrodrive	retroDrive4.zip	Megadrive emulator	290Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	One of the newer Megadrive emulators. Supports the 32X
RockNES	rnes330.zip	NES emulator	384Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A very good NES emulator with support for many mappers
Snes9x	snes9x-1.42-win32.zip	SNES emulator	668Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The best SNES emulator available. Plays every game tested
SoftMac	softmacd.zip	Mac emulator	10,138Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the Apple Mac on your Windows PC
SPIN	SPIN041.zip	Spectrum emulator	783Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulates all Spectrum models
SSF	SSF_007_prototype_R3.zip	Saturn emulator	289Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	One of the only Sega Saturn emulators
STEem	steem_v2_61.zip	Atari ST emulator	581Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	This new emulator runs all ST software
StellaX	stellax-1.1.3a-win32.zip	Atari 2600 emulator	396Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The best 2600 emulator available
UltraHLE	ultrahle_v1_0.zip	N64 emulator	172Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	For sentimental sake only - the world's first N64 emulator
v7800	v7800r12.zip	Atari 7800 emulator	303Kb	DOS	Freeware	The only Atari 7800 emulator available. ROM files required
Virtual ColecoVision	vcolz11a.zip	ColecoVision emulator	157Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Emulate the ColecoVision console on your Windows system
Virtual Super System	vss80.zip	Atari 5200 emulator	458Kb	DOS	Freeware	The first 5200 emulator. Only runs in DOS mode
VisualBoy Advance	VisualBoyAdvance-1.7.zip	GBA emulator	512Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Without doubt the best GBA emulator available
WinApe32	WinAPE_20a5b.zip	Amstrad CPC emulator	1,016Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	Our favourite CPC emulator. Compatible with many games
WinFellow	winfellow_alpha_v043.zip	Amiga emulator	266Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A recommended alternative to the well-known WinUAE
WinSTon	winston_v5.zip	Atari ST emulator	651Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The definite Atari ST emulator for Windows
WinUAE	WinUAE0823.zip	Amiga emulator	1,162Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The classic Amiga emulator, updated to run on Windows
WinVICE	WinVICE-1.13.zip	Commodore emulator	3,324Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The ultimate Commodore emulator. Supports all models
Xtender2	XT2811B.zip	ZX80/81 emulator	220Kb	DOS	Freeware	DOS-based ZX80/81 emulator
z26	Z26V207X.ZIP	Atari 2600 emulator	148Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	The Windows version of a very capable 2600 emulator
ZSNES	zsnesw1.36.zip	SNES emulator	456Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	A very impressive SNES emulator
ZX32	zx32th02.zip	Spectrum emulator	255Kb	Windows (all)	Freeware	An excellent Speccy emulator

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LOGOS

PICTURES / SCREENSAVERS

MUSIC RINGTONES

MONOPHONIC & POLYPHONIC RINGTONES - mono code first, poly code second if available

	MONO	POLY
2Pac - Changes	5156	9240
3 Days Grace - I Hate	9594	9580
50 Cent - 21 Questions	8973	8636
50 Cent - In Da Club	8133	8500
50 Cent - Pimp	9078	9386
Aaliyah - I Miss You	8099	8301
ACDC - Whole Lotta Rosie	3936	9572
Alex Parks - Maybe That's	9532	9526
All American Rejects - The Last Song	9423	-
All-American - Swing Swing	9062	-
Angel City - Love Me	9466	-
Avril Lavigne - Complicated	6779	7976
Barry Manilow - Copacabana	6068	8318
Basement - Lucky Star	9508	-
Beatles - Hey Jude	3810	8319
Bee Gees - Staying Alive	1109	8320
Benny - Satisfaction	9017	9036
Beyonce - Baby Boy	9356	9360
Beyonce - Crazy In Love	8765	8646
Big Brovaz - Baby Boy	9197	9236
Big Brovaz - Favourite Things	8618	8619
Billy Idol - White Wedding	1112	9571
Black Eyed Peas - Shut Up	9586	9599
Black Eyed Ps - Where Is The	9195	9246
Black Lace - Agadoo	6526	8327
Black Sabbath - Paranoid	4013	7169
Blazin' Squad - Flip Reverse	9488	9484
Blink 182 - Feeling This	9497	9576
Blu Cantrell - Breathe	9065	9041
Blue - Guilty	9405	9379
Bon Jovi - Living On A Prayer	3945	9569
Britney - Me Against Music	9502	9517
Busta Rhymes - I Know What	8587	8659
Busted - Crashed The Wedding	9501	9514
Busted - You Said No	8590	8651
Christina A - Dirrty	7912	7898
CKY - 96 Quite Bitter Beings	6080	7168
Coldplay - Clocks	8248	8344
Craig David - Rise & Fall	8609	8656
Darkness - Thing Called Love	9157	9258
Deep Purple - Smoke On The	3827	9570
Delta Goodrem - Innocent Eyes	9272	9259
Delta Goodrem - Not Me Not I	9592	9581
Depeche Mode - Just Can't	1165	9046
Dido - Life For Rent	9589	9596
Dido - White Flag	9196	9247
Distillers - Drain The Blood	9424	-
Dizzee Rascal - Fix Up Look	9134	-
Dizzee Rascal - Jus' A Rascal	9553	-
DJ Otzi - Hey Baby	5254	8364
DJ Sammy - Heaven	7137	8366
DMX - X Gon' Give It To Ya	8593	8659
Dr. Dre - Forget About Dre	1179	9043
Dr. Dre - Still Dre	3821	9054
D-Side - Real World	9590	9597
Electric Six - Gay Bar	8724	8661
Elton John - Are You Ready	9142	9174
Elvis Presley - Rubberneckin'	9271	9263
Eminem - Business	8997	8662
Eminem - Lose Yourself	8137	8101
Europe - Final Countdown	5353	9567
Evanescence - Bring Me To	8605	8774
Evanescence - Going Under	9167	9256
Exile - Kiss You All Over	9575	9568
Fast Food Rockers - Fast Food	8780	8775
Fatman Scoop - Be Faithful	9404	9376
Finch - New Beginnings	9168	-
Frank Sinatra - New York,	1209	8382
Frankie J - Suga Suga	9547	-
Gareth Gates - Say It Isn't	9587	9598
Gareth Gates - Spirit In Sky	8214	8393
Gareth Gates - Sunshine	9217	9244
Girls Aloud - Jump	9531	9522
Good Charlotte - Girls Boys	8606	8665
Good Charlotte - Lifestyles	8070	8400
Good Charlotte - Young & Hopeless	9425	-
Guns 'n' Roses - Sweet Child	8589	8977
Gwen Stefani - Hollaback	9408	9388
Hanson - Mmmbop	8284	-
Him - Buried Alive By Love	9169	-
Him - Sacrament	6339	8402
Him - Tom Malden - Rainmaker	9498	-
Ja Rule - Clap Back	9549	9529
Ja Rule - Reigns	9555	-
Jamelia - Superstar	9222	9266
Johnny Cash - Hurt	9495	-
Judas Priest - Breaking The	9574	9566
Jurgen Vries - Wilderness	9274	-
Justin Timberlake - Cry Me A	8067	8416
Justin Timberlake - Senorita	9225	8778
Katie Melua - The Closest	9591	9600
Kelly & Ozzy - Changes	9512	-
Kelly Clarkson - Low	9541	-
Kevin Lyttle - Turn Me On	9393	9391
Korn - Blind	3964	7166
Kylie Minogue - Slow	9487	9486
Lemar - 50 50	9533	9520
Limp Bizkit - Behind Blue Eye	9475	-
Linkin Park - From The Inside	9499	-
Linkin Park - Numb	9160	9582
Lost Prophets - Burn Burn	9358	-
Madness - One Step Beyond	3598	8927
Marcie Blane - Bobby's Girl	9234	9237
Mary J Blige - Not Today	9554	-
Melanie C - Melt	9509	-
Metallica - Nothing Else	5142	9051
Metallica - St Anger	8934	8929
Missy Elliott - Pass That Dutch	9505	9518
Mis-Teeq - Style	9536	-
Murderdolls - White Wedding	8946	-
Muse - Hysteria	9546	9579
Nelly - Dilemma	7952	7951
Nelly - Shake Ya Tailfeather	9207	9242
Nickelback - Someday	9221	9264
Obie Trice - Got Some Teeth	9407	9378
Outkast - Hey Ya	9503	9515
Ozzy Osbourne - Bark At The	4327	9564
Pet Shop Boys - Miracles	9534	9527
Pharrell - Frontin'	9108	9179
Pink - Trouble	9463	9482
Pink Floyd - Another Brick	1311	8471
Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody	1315	8475
Queen - We Are The Champions	1314	9056
Queen - We Will Rock You	4410	9057
R Kelly - Ignition Remix	8210	8476
Rachel Stevens - Sweet Dreams	9218	9267
Radiohead - 2 + 2 = 5	9537	-
Rainbow - All Night Long	9573	9563
Red Hot - Fortune Faded	9506	9577
Red Hot Chili Ps - Can't Stop	8143	8478
Rishi Rich - Dance With	9209	-
Robbie Williams - Angels	3580	8482
Robbie Williams - Let Me	5149	8483
Robbie Williams - Rock DJ	3566	8484
Robbie Williams - Sexed Up	9489	9485
Rolling Stones - Paint It	3800	8536
Ronan Keating - Lost For Words	9504	9516
Scooter - Logical Song	6818	8503
Scooter - Maria	9348	-
Scooter - The Logical Song	6658	8503
Scooter - The Night	8936	-
Sean Paul - Get Busy	8262	8682
Sean Paul - Like Glue	9143	9165
Sex Pistols - God Save The	6622	8505
Shaggy - It Wasn't Me	3676	8507
Shane Richie - I'm Your Man	9539	9521
Shania Twain - Up	9544	-
Simon And - Mrs Robinson	4885	8515
Simply Red - You Make Me	9588	9601
So Solid Crew - Broken	9223	9251
Stacie Orrico - Here To Life	9409	-
Stacie Orrico - Stuck	9120	9192
Starsailor - Born Again	9543	-
Status Quo - Caroline	3824	8522
Stone Temple - Suit That	8593	9585
Sugababes - Hole In The Head	9392	9380
Tina Turner - Simply The Best	3870	8545
Toploader - Dancin' In	3677	8548
Trapt - Still Frame	9595	9584
Trucks - It's Just Porn Mum	7235	8552
UB40 - Red Red Wine	1398	8562
UD Project - Summer Jam	9273	-
Ultrabeat - Pretty Green Eyes	9105	9188
Vas Morrison - Brown Eyed	4935	8563
Wayne Wonder - No Letting Go	8782	8700
Westlife - Hey Whatever	9219	9257
Westlife - Mandy	9530	9525
White Stripes - 7 Nation Army	8594	8701
White Stripes - Hardest	9478	9578
Will Young - Leave Right Now	9542	9523
XTM & DJ - Fly On Wings	8730	-

TV / MOVIE & OTHERS - WAP REQUIRED TO RETRIEVE POLYPHONIC RINGTONES

	MONO	POLY
Adams Family	1434	9373
Angel	4603	8949
A-Team	6454	8454
Austin Powers	1026	8690
Banana Splits	5016	8950
Benny Hill	1027	8165
Beverly Hills Cop	1432	9250
Black Beauty	5501	8167
Bod	5875	9377
Buffy	1028	8553
Captain Pugwash	4620	9239
Cricket (BBC TV)	4609	9375
Dambusters	5788	8782
Deliverance	4457	9253
Exorcist	4460	7167
Formula 1 (The Chain)	3592	9032
Friends	4632	8535
Godfather	4461	9255
Good, Bad & Ugly	4465	9268
Great Escape	3594	8956
Hawaii Five O	3533	8695
Itchy And Scratchy	4642	9282
James Bond	1430	8077
League Of Gentlemen	5865	9034
Littlest Hobo	8016	9283
Lord Of Rings	7950	9286
Magic Roundabout	3553	8960
Magnificent Seven	4920	9383
Mission Imposs 2	1261	9261
Mission Imposs	1421	6975
Muppets	4650	8271
Only Fools Horses	6732	8697
Pinkie Nights	7538	8704
Pulp Fiction	6715	8698
Rainbow	4924	8964
Rocky	1050	8542
Scooby Doo	4562	9241
Simpsons	1439	7164
Spiderman	6657	9389
Steptoe And Son	9279	9265
Tigger's Song	6453	7163
Winnie Pooh	3893	6978

MOBILE JAVA GAMES

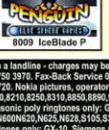
Nokia 3100,3300,3410,3510i,3650,5100,6100,6310i,6610,6800,7210,7250, 7650,N-Gage,Siemens MT50/M50,C55,M55,S55.Sharp GX-10.Motorola T720

8001 Aston Golf (see #1)
8908 Big Tree (see #2)
8909 Black vs White
8002 Black Widow
8003 Chains
8004 Demon's Treasure
8005 Diamond Mine
8910 Diamond Mine 2 (see #2)
8911 Escape Master (see #2)
8906 Forge a Fortune
8907 Fruit Machine
8006 Hell's Pit
8009 IceBlade Penguin (see #2)
8912 Maze Ark
8913 Maze Ark: The Mission
8914 Moon Taxi (see #3)
8915 New Skool Skater (see #4)
8010 Pillar Dodge
#1 except 6310i #2 except T720 #3 except M55,S55,T720 #4 except all siemens,6310i

8914 Moon Taxi

8007 Fruit Machine

8915 Skool Skater

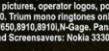


8009 IceBlade P

ANIMATED

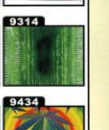
6988 - BAD BOY!

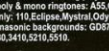
7121 - SPINNING SKULL

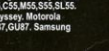


7119 - SCARY MASK

COLOUR BACKGROUNDS







7005 - DOG LICKS

7016 - CHEEKY MONKEY

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